Casey, Beatrice Marie

GOOD THINGS FOR EASTER

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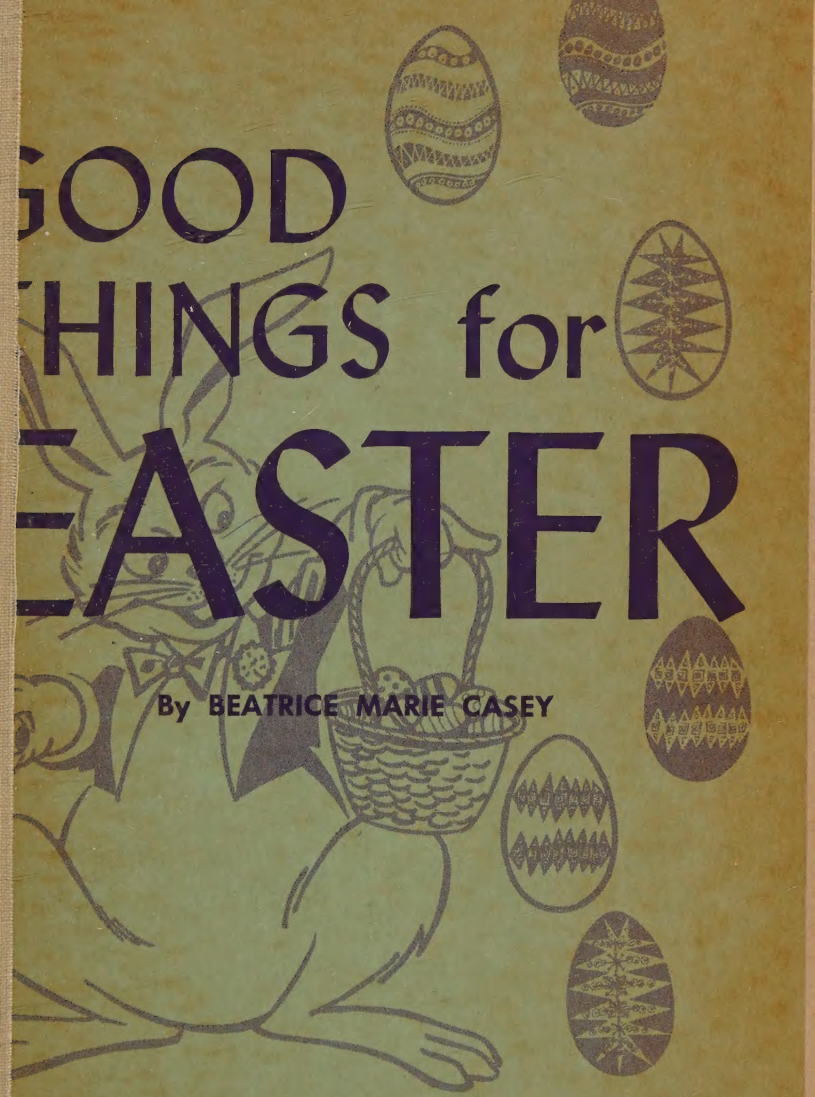
By BEATRICE MARIE CASEY



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GOOD THINGS FOR EASTER

RECITATIONS, MONOLOGUES, DIALOGUES, PLAYS, EXERCISES, AND DRILLS

FOR ALL AGES

BY
BEATRICE MARIE CASEY
AUTHOR OF
"The Popular Christmas Book," "Good Things for Special Holidays," and "Good Things for Halloween"

MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA
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MUSIC OF THE BOOK

The songs in this book are to be sung to old airs that are presumably familiar to everyone. If any of them should prove unfamiliar, however, the music will be found in Denison's *"Songs Worth While,"* one of the best arranged and most carefully edited collections of old favorites ever published. This book is beautifully printed on non-glossy paper, measuring 7 by 10¼ inches, and is well bound in a stout paper cover done in colors. It may be obtained from the publishers for the price of $1.00, postpaid.

PUBLISHERS' NOTE ON COSTUMES.—The publishers of this book do not handle the crêpe paper suggested for the costumes described in the various exercises and drills, nor the gray building paper used in "The Procession of the Easter Pilgrims" and other exercises. Both these items may, however, be obtained at the stores of practically all towns of any ordinary size throughout the country.

STAGE DIRECTIONS

Up stage means away from footlights; *down stage,* near footlights. In the use of *right* and *left,* the performers are supposed to be facing the audience.

GOOD THINGS FOR EASTER

SPRING FEVER

(*Recitation for a boy*)

Mother says I've got spring fever,
And she gave me horrid pills;
(*He grimaces horribly.*)
'Course, she's great, but women never
Know about a fellah's ills.

(*He walks a few paces disconsolately.*)

There's a queer and restless feeling
(*Runs his fingers through his hair.*)
Gets me when it's nearly spring;
'Times, I'm blue, without a reason,
(*Sighs heavily and pauses.*)
Then I laugh like anything!
(*Laughs, slapping his knees.*)

When the wind blows, loud and jolly,
Then I spread my arms and fly!
(*Arms wide, he springs toward right, then drops arms and grins.*)
But my mother says, "It's dreadful
How you spoil your shoes, oh, my!"
(*Shakes head, discouraged.*)

When I sit still by the hour,
(*With arms folded, looks up.*)
In my oak tree tower high,

Watching clouds, just feeling dreamy,
(*Drones this line slowly.*)
Why (*hands up*), ma says, "It's too much pie!"
(*Sniffs and goes to center.*)

Through the winter, soap and water
Used to make me have a pain;
(*Waves imaginary soap away.*)
Now I scrub so I am shiny
As a new leaf after rain.

(*He runs his hands through his hair and goes to right.*)

I know how to cure this fever,
(*Holds up finger, looking wise.*)
If they'll give me half a chance;
(*Grins and winks.*)
With a brand-new suit for Easter—
(*Runs both hands proudly down body.*)
And my first pair of (*leans forward*) long pants!

(*Grins and exit.*)

THE EASTER OFFERING

(*Monologue for a small girl*)

(*The speaker carries in a potted and rather sorry-looking red geranium with one broken blossom, which is shedding its petals. Against right wing is a small stand and some one should be stationed out of sight near it, ready to slip a potted Easter lily on this stand, removing the geranium without being seen by audience.*)

The little girl runs in happily.

LITTLE GIRL. Good morning, Mr. Wright. Happy

Easter! (*She bows quaintly.*) Can you wait a minute, please? I'm all out of breath. (*Laughs breathlessly.*) I ran all the way from home to bring you my Easter offering. (*Holds out plant.*) Uh-huh! (*Nods.*) It's my very own.

It was only a wee slip when Mrs. Crosley gave it to me last Easter. (*She looks up and nods, giggling.*) Yes, she did, really. No wonder you look surprised, because everybody knows that she doesn't like little girls or little kittens or little babies or little Easter bunnies (*laughs*)—or little anythings, I guess. She's terribly cross. (*She looks fierce, then smiles.*)

But I'll tell you how she happened to give me my precious geranium. (*Walks a few steps.*) It was the day before Easter last year, and she was taking her plants out of the house, because it was so lovely and warm out, and (*she begins to giggle*)—and she had a great, big pot of geraniums in her arms, and she fell flat! (*Hands to her mouth, eyes dancing.*)

But I didn't laugh then. No; I didn't, honest! Even when I saw that she had fallen right on top of the pot and smashed it all to smithereens! (*Rocks back and forth with laughter.*) My, she looked funny! But I didn't laugh, 'cause I didn't want to hurt her feelings, you see. I just ran and helped her up, though she is awful heavy. I think she weighs 'most a ton. (*Her shoulders sag, and she sighs.*)

But I was awful glad I could keep my face straight, for she took a slip of geranium, and she gave it to me, and she said, "You are a nice little girl. Put this into a pot, and soon you will have pretty red flowers on it, if you take care of it."

My! I was so glad to have a baby geranium all my very own! And I took awful good care of it, so it would be pretty for this Easter. (*She looks shy suddenly.*) So, dear Mr. Wright, would you put it into some little corner of the church, so the dear Lord can see it?

It isn't as pretty as an Easter lily. (*Clasps a hand upon her heart, yearningly.*) How I wish I had a tall Easter lily to give to Him! (*She brightens.*) But this will look bright. Won't it? And the dear Lord will know that I gave Him the best I have. (*She caresses the bent blossom.*)

You see, it is bent a little, where I squeezed it too hard, when that big, rough Ralph Gage tried to take it away from me just back there. (*Points behind her.*) O-oh! (*Looks angry.*) I wish I was big enough to shake him, and shake him good and hard! (*Her eyes snap, then she looks up with a grin.*) But I guess that isn't being very Easter-y. I—I didn't want him to break my precious geranium.

Do you really think it will look nice enough? I'd be so glad to have it in God's house on Easter Sunday! (*She sets it upon the stand at right and steps back to survey the effect.*) You see, it looks lovely if you aren't too near it. (*She turns her back to the stand, concealing it so that the Easter lily may be substituted for the geranium, unseen by audience.*) Thank you, dear Mr. Wright; you are so good. You'll handle it carefully, won't you? Like this, see?

(*She turns to pick up the plant and sees the lily. She turns toward front, staring incredulously, then back to lily, hesitatingly touching it, and looking over her shoulder to front.*) Why—why— (*She timidly takes pot of lilies in her hands and faces front, still wearing an awed and rapt look of ecstasy.*) Look, Mr. Wright! My poor geranium is gone, and (*in a whisper*) see! (*She holds pot against her breast, lovingly.*) A beautiful, beautiful Easter lily for my offering! (*She holds the plant out to the imaginary Mr. Wright.*)

THE CHILD AND THE TREE

(*Dialogue for a boy and a girl*)

CHARACTERS

THE TREE THE GIRL

COSTUMES.—The boy who plays the part of the Tree, and who is much taller than the Girl, wears a tight-fitting suit of some rough brown material to suggest the bark of a tree trunk. The Girl wears a pretty white dress.

SCENE: *A garden in spring. Along the back and sides of the stage potted spring flowers and artificial vines may be arranged to give the effect of a garden. The* TREE *stands at center rear. The boy forms the trunk of the* TREE, *his feet wrapped in artificial moss, and his arms thrust up among the branches which are fastened to a hidden support in such a way as to simulate a real tree. The branches are covered with blossoms, either real or artificial. In each closed hand the boy has a handful of pink crêpe paper petals. An electric fan is concealed behind the branches to produce the breeze at the end of the play.*

When the curtain is drawn, the TREE *is gently agitating his branches. The* GIRL *runs lightly in from left and comes close to the tree.*

GIRL. Happy Easter, dearest Tree! Don't you wish you could dance like me? (*She dances, whirling gayly about the stage with flying arms and tossing head.*)

TREE. Why, I dance, dear little friend! Don't you see my branches bend? (*He shakes the boughs lightly.*)

GIRL (*clapping her hands and looking up at* TREE). Why, you're like a pinky light, with your blossoms pinky white!

TREE. I'm not always quite so gay, but I'm dressed for Easter Day.

GIRL (*tiptoeing near* TREE *and leaning toward trunk*). Here's a secret! Hold it tight! I've a new dress, too; it's white. (*She spreads her skirts and dances forward a few steps.*)

TREE. You'll be white from toe to chin: white without and pure within!

GIRL. And I'll walk so very proud (*struts back and forth in laughing imitation of a great lady*) through the dressed-up Easter crowd.

TREE. I am proud when I remember that unforgettable December.

GIRL (*running eagerly to left of* TREE). Oh, do you mean when Jesus lay in a manger filled with hay?

TREE. Yes, my child, my forbears there sheltered Bethlehem's stable bare.

GIRL. Oh, how lovely just to know they shielded Jesus from the snow!

TREE. And one shaded from the sun Joseph, Mary, and the Holy One.

GIRL. And maybe Jesus loved to stray beneath a tree, when tired of play. (*She strolls thoughtfully to right.*)

TREE. And one, beside the Jordan River, at God's great voice did bend and quiver.

GIRL. Why, didn't he know the God above him only wants us all to love Him? (*She clasps both hands to her heart and nods wisely.*)

TREE. And, 'neath one tree, where He took rest, our loving Savior the children blest.

GIRL (*running back to* TREE *and striking her hands together in eagerness*). Oh, how I wish that *I* had been one of those little girls just then!

TREE. Hush, little girl! (*Solemnly.*) A tree like this saw Judas give his traitor kiss.

GIRL (*backing away in horror*). Oh, oh, how could he be so blind? How could he sell his Master kind?

TREE (*sadly*). Come nearer, child, and feel my tears, still flowing through the bitter years!

GIRL (*gently patting* TREE *and speaking softly*). Why, dear Tree, why do you cry? (*Starting suddenly.*) Is that a breeze, or do you sigh?

TREE. Ah, yes, I sigh in dreadful loss, for from a tree was shaped (*whispering*)—the cross!

GIRL. Oh, often, often (*leaning her head against a low branch*) have I cried, when I thought of Jesus crucified!

TREE. In winter, the black trees that groan for that grim tree's sin would atone.

GIRL (*stepping back and surveying* TREE). But now you're very, very gay. What are you remembering today?

TREE (*shaking branches*). Ah! This glad Easter, I am reborn, for Christ arose on Easter morn.

GIRL. Oh, is that why my heart just sings (*springing up and down in glee*) and I feel as though I had white wings? (*She leaps lightly on tiptoe to front, arms wide, laughing.*)

TREE. Yes, little child, laugh and be gay! For joy was born on Easter Day.

GIRL (*runs and stands under branches, arms held up, face upturned, profile to audience*). Thank you, dear Tree! I'll never fail, when blossoming branches sway above, to think of that first Easter dawn, and praise our Savior for His love!

(*Suddenly the boy playing the* TREE *opens his hands and lets fall a shower of pink blossoms over the* GIRL. *At the same time some one behind the scenes turns on the electric fan so that the petals are blown about as though by the wind. The* GIRL *smiles and claps her hands, then runs gayly off the stage.*)

(NOTE.—*It would be doubly effective if appropriate music were played very softly throughout the dialogue.*)

THE EASTER GUEST

(Play for ten girls)

CHARACTERS

RENA DE VOYD, *a rich and haughty young girl*
IRIS DE VOYD, *her vain young sister*
PAULETTE DE VOYD, *their youngest sister*
NANNIE O'SHEA, *the De Voyds' middle-aged maid*
VERA FENWICK, *a small-town cousin of the De Voyds*
DORRY, MIRIAM, FRANCES, ELSA, PEG — *friends of the De Voyd girls*

COSTUMES.—All the girls except Vera are fashionably dressed in expensive-looking clothes. Peg and Paulette, being little interested in clothes, wear simpler dresses than the others. Vera wears a neat dark suit, very plain, with hat to harmonize. At their first entrance, Dorry, Miriam, Frances, Elsa, and Peg, all wear hats and coats, which they later discard and reveal pretty and, with the exception of Peg, rather elaborate dinner frocks.

SCENE: *The living room of the De Voyds' elegant home in a large city. A double door with draperies, up center, opens into the hall. A door down left leads into the dining room. The remainder of left wall is taken up by a fireplace, with a luxurious rug in front of it. Two easy chairs are drawn up at either side of the fireplace, each being flanked by a small table holding a lamp, books, and flowers. A piano, with its bench, stands in the upper right corner, and a floor lamp stands at left of it. A small desk with chair occupies the lower right corner. Pretty cushions are here and there, and pictures or tapestries adorn the walls. Other furnishings*

may be added to enhance the effect, if desired. It is the day before Easter.

As the curtain rises, PAULETTE *is discovered, sitting at center front on a heap of cushions upon the floor, reading a letter;* IRIS *is seated upon the piano bench, intently studying a book of fashions which is spread out before her. Her face is half averted from the audience.*

PAULETTE (*suddenly flinging the letter down*). Oh, bother!

IRIS (*looking up*). What's wrong now? Your Easter hat can't get here in time?

PAULETTE. No; it's Jean who can't be here for our Easter house party. Her mother isn't well, she says. (*Reading letter again.*)

IRIS (*intent upon her styles again*). Really, it's just as well. (*Pauses, then continues enthusiastically.*) Oh, this is a lovely model! I wish I had had my beige dress made like that. Look, Paulette. (*Holds book out.*) Dorry has one nearly like it, in orchid crêpe. Pretty?

PAULETTE (*refusing to be interested, still crumpling letter absently*). Dear me! I am disappointed. Jean is such fun.

IRIS (*putting book down on bench, and rising to walk across to mirror to admire her gown*). But Paulette, she isn't a bit stylish. You know that Dorry and Miriam make fun of her clothes.

PAULETTE (*springing to her feet in anger*). Oh, those two! They're just a couple of dress hangers!

IRIS (*haughtily, at center back*). Paulette de Voyd, they are my friends!

PAULETTE. I don't care if they are! (*She gesticulates vehemently in her excitement.*) All they can think about, all they can talk about, all they care to look at is clothes! (*Sniffs scornfully and flops down on desk chair, with her back turned to* IRIS, *and prepares to*

write.) I'll bet poor Jean won't have a single new hanky for Easter, but she's worth a dozen Dorries and a gross of Miriams. (*Scribbles madly, her head bent low.*)

IRIS (*coming to front*). Don't be silly. Doris and Miriam are very popular, and that's because they dress so well.

PAULETTE (*without looking up*). Frances and Elsa have loads more clothes than they do, but I don't see people falling over themselves to invite Frances or Elsa.

IRIS (*leaning against back of chair down left and smoothing her dress*). You're only a little girl. You don't understand.

PAULETTE (*looking up, comically imitating an aged person looking over glasses and speaking in a cracked voice*). Oh, am I? Well, grandma, maybe you'll explain.

IRIS. Frances is really a dear, but she's shy with strangers, and Elsa has such loads of money that she thinks she can always say whatever she likes. She doesn't flatter people. But I don't mind her ways. (*She smiles and struts back and forth.*) She buys her things from the most exclusive houses, and she is very generous. (*Looks wise.*)

PAULETTE. Iris de Voyd, you don't mean that you let her give you clothes, when you already have so many that you'll have to hire a block to store them!

IRIS (*lightly, taking a few dance steps*). Why not, child? A girl never has too many dresses or hats. Elsa promised to bring me three hats this time.

PAULETTE (*throwing down her pen*). Well! That's what I call disgraceful.

IRIS (*coming to her*). What?

PAULETTE. Selling your friendship for a few rags! *I* like my friends for themselves.

IRIS (*turning away, up stage*). Rubbish! I dare say that your dearest chum Peg will bring a trunkful of rags when she comes for this week-end.

PAULETTE (*rising*). Peg? Why, she wears what-

ever her mother tells her to; she doesn't know whether it's percale or satin.

IRIS. But you spend hours looking over her percales, and trying them on, I notice. (*She flips her hands laughingly at* PAULETTE.) Don't try to high-hat me, little one! You like clothes as well as any girl.

PAULETTE (*storming down center*). I don't! I don't! You make me so disgusted that I've a mind to wear a burlap bag the rest of my days!

(*The doorbell rings, off up center.*)

IRIS (*glancing at her watch and running to double doors up center*). It can't be the girls so soon.

PAULETTE (*clapping her hands, perfectly good-humored in an instant*). Maybe it's my new spring coat from Madame's. (*Jumping up and down.*) I hope so. (IRIS *bursts into laughter, pointing both forefingers at* PAULETTE.) What are you laughing at?

IRIS (*mimicking*). I don't care for clothes! I want a burlap bag!

PAULETTE (*seizing* IRIS *by the hair*). Iris de Voyd, if you laugh at me, I'll make a nice, soft bed for my seven kittens in your newest Easter bunnit.

IRIS (*shrinking back, with an expression of repulsion*). Ugh! The horrid things! Before mother left, she told you to give them away.

PAULETTE (*grinning*). I mean to. I'm going to give one to Miriam (*counts on her fingers*), one to Dorry, one to Elsa, one to Frances, one to Peg, and I was going to give one to Jean, but now I'll send it.

IRIS (*stamping her foot*). You shan't! You mustn't have the horrid things about the house during our Easter house party. Mother told you!

(*There is a sound of heavy footsteps stamping along the hall.*)

PAULETTE. Never mind. Here comes Nannie. May-

be she's got a telegram from mother, telling me to spare the kittens.

Enter NANNIE, *up center, with a sealed telegram.* PAULETTE *makes a mock dramatic gesture with her hands as* NANNIE *comes in, then rushes up to her.*

PAULETTE (*triumphantly*). It is! It is! It is!

NANNIE (*pushing* PAULETTE *away*). Is it wound up ye are? "It is! It is! It is!"

PAULETTE (*taking telegram from* NANNIE). A telegram from mother! Is it?

IRIS. You should give it to me, Nannie.

NANNIE. Sure, Miss Paulette has it.

IRIS. But I am older. (*Draws herself up.*)

NANNIE (*calmly taking telegram from* PAULETTE). Sure now, if it's the oldest should git it, I'll be givin' it to Miss Rena. (*Turns to go.*)

IRIS (*checking* NANNIE). No, no. Rena won't tell us what's in it.

PAULETTE. "No, no," is right. Nannie, give me that scrip this minute, or you'll never see another Easter. (*She takes telegram.*)

IRIS (*crossing to* PAULETTE'S *side*). You may go, Nannie, if that's all.

NANNIE (*planting her feet firmly and crossing her arms*). Then, begorra, I'll be shtayin', for there's plinty more.

IRIS. What is it?

NANNIE. It 'ud be a boy with boxes and boxes and boxes— (*Making motions with her hands as if piling boxes high.*)

PAULETTE (*making similar motions and piling still higher*). And boxes and boxes of Easter hats, eh?

NANNIE. It's the truth ye've said. A million dollars' worth of Easter for their heads, and not a pinny's worth for their hearts, be sure now! (*Rests her hands on her hips.*)

IRIS (*sternly*). Nannie!

PAULETTE (*beguilingly, stroking* NANNIE'S *arm*). It's right ye are, Nannie, me darlint. (*Tearing open envelope of telegram.*) Here's where we hear the news.

Enter RENA *at left.*

RENA. What news? A telegram for you, Paulette?

PAULETTE. No. (*Looking more closely at the envelope*). Why, it's addressed *to* mother, so it isn't from her, Iris, after all. Mother doesn't generally talk to herself.

RENA (*puts her hand out peremptorily*). Give it to me.

(PAULETTE *puts telegram behind her.*)

IRIS (*crossing to left*). Will you let us see it, too?

RENA (*to* NANNIE). What are you waiting for?

NANNIE. What am I to be doin' with the boy an' all thim boxes?

RENA. Oh! Those are the hats I'm going to try on. Tell the boy to leave them, and come for those I don't want to-morrow at one.

NANNIE (*starts up center*). That I will. (*In doorway.*) And I'll be sayin' this much for him: his load to-morrow will be lighter than his load to-day. (*Stamps out at center.*)

RENA (*frowning*). She's hopeless! (*She puts hand out to* PAULETTE, *who hands her the telegram, crowding close to see the contents.*) It's from Vera!

IRIS (*dismayed*). Cousin Vera!

PAULETTE (*eagerly*). What does she say? Quick!

RENA (*reading*). "Arrive 5 P. M., Saturday. Wire if inconvenient."

IRIS. Mercy!

RENA (*looking at her watch*). My heavens! This must have been delayed. It is nearly six now—too late

to stop her. (*Rumples paper and flounces to left door.*)

PAULETTE (*following* RENA). Stop her! Why should you stop her? I'm glad. She'll take Jean's place, and I love her.

RENA. You love her! Why, she's my age!

IRIS. And you've seen her only once—for a day!

PAULETTE. That's enough to know that she's lovely, with some sense in her head, and she sings like a nightingale, too.

RENA (*in left doorway*). And looks like a frump.

IRIS (*flopping down on piano bench*). That day we were there, she wore a faded house dress in the afternoon.

PAULETTE. She was making jelly. Did you expect her to trail a white chiffon gown and carry a rose silk sunshade? Have some sense, children. I'm glad she's coming—me! (*Sits on her cushions.*)

RENA. Well, I'm not, but it can't be helped. She won't fit in our crowd at all. She's all church and Sunday school and sacred music.

PAULETTE (*her mouth wide open a moment*). Dear me! Then she won't fit; that's right. Poor Vera! (*Raises her eyes.*) I'll entertain her; I'll fight for her. (*She strolls to front, rolling up her sleeves.*)

RENA. Paulette! Will you try not to be so vulgar? And remember that *I* am the hostess, when mother's away.

PAULETTE. Well, I'll be first aide. (*Grins.*) Vera'll need it. You two will talk flowered chiffon and accordion-pleated crêpe to her, until she hollers for help.

IRIS (*copying* RENA'S *haughty manner*). Hollers!

PAULETTE. Then yells, sweetheart. (*Blows a kiss to* IRIS.)

RENA (*coming back into room and standing near fireplace*). Now listen to me, Paulette. I most surely do intend to talk clothes to Vera, and I hope that she will come before the girls get here, so that I shall have time to dress her suitably. Horrors! I can just imagine

that she will arrive in a suit and last year's hat, and expect to go to our fashionable church for Easter Sunday services with us.

IRIS (*jumping up*). No!

PAULETTE. Cheer up. She knows Dr. Blake, and he'll surely want her to sing, so she won't sit with you at all.

IRIS. She'll want to attend all the services all day long, and one of us will have to go with her to be polite, and all our plans will be upset.

RENA. I shall not change one of my plans; a guest should fit her plans to her hostess' wishes. So! (*Turns back to left door.*)

(*Girls' gay voices are heard in the hall, off up center.*)

IRIS. Oh, there are the girls. (*Exit quickly, up center.*)

RENA (*following more slowly*). Dear! I did hope that Vera would get here first. (*Exit, up center.*)

PAULETTE (*leaning in a slump upon her knees and cupping her chin in her hands*). Mother, mother, why did you go away, just when a feller needs a friend!

Enter RENA, *up center, with* DORRY *on one arm and* MIRIAM *on the other, followed by* IRIS, *dragging in* FRANCES *with one hand, and* ELSA *with the other, and lastly,* PEG. *All are smiling and hugging and kissing one another.* PAULETTE *rises and goes up center.*

RENA. Dorry darling, you look simply adorable. Turn around.

DORRY (*turning languidly*). H'lo, Paulette.

RENA. And Frances! Stunning! And Miriam, too. (*She turns each girl in turn, admiring her clothes.*) Elsa! Of course that hat came from Paris? My goodness, but you are all gorgeous!

ELSA. I didn't forget your three hats, Iris. (*Sitting on piano bench with* IRIS.)

IRIS. Three! Oh, come right up and show them to me! (*Pulls* ELSA *to her feet.*)

PAULETTE (*pushing the others aside to look for* PEG, *who has remained just inside doorway*). Where are you, Peg? (*Hugs* PEG *and draws her into room, down toward desk.*)

PEG. Oh, I always bring up the rear.

PAULETTE (*swinging* PEG'S *hands*). Peg, old egg, I'm glad you're here.

RENA. Paulette! (PAULETTE *puts a demure finger tip to her mouth and bats her eyelids rapidly at* RENA.) Now Frances, you and Elsa are to be together, and Dorry and Miriam in the rose room—Iris, you go up with them—and Peg—

PAULETTE. Peg'll bunk with me, since Jean couldn't come. And that will leave the green room for Vera.

ALL THE GUESTS. Who's Vera?

RENA. Oh, just a cousin of ours. (*Ushers the guests toward the double doors.*) She's an unexpected guest. She didn't know we were having an Easter party.

PEG. Is she fun? Do we know her?

IRIS } (*together*). { Oh, no.
PAULETTE } { She's great!

(*The guests look perplexed.*)

RENA (*laughing in embarrassment*). Well—it's just that—well, she's different. I'll tell you all about her. But come now, and look at my new things before we go up. (*She turns the girls about and takes them out through left door, leaving* PEG *and* PAULETTE *at right.*)

PEG (*hunching a shoulder toward left*). Something's up, eh, Paulette?

PAULETTE (*making a lifting motion with both hands, nods*). 'Way up! And you and I, Peg-o, have got to stand by Vera, or she'll have a bad Easter of it. (*In a*

lower tone.) She's a peach; and how she can sing! But she'd never take a prize at a fashion show.

PEG. What difference does that make? I'll like her if you do.

PAULETTE. She's a peach, I tell you. She—

NANNIE (*loudly, off up center*). Sure, I'ave yer bag there, miss. I'll be takin' it up for ye.

PAULETTE (*drawing* PEG *toward double doors*). Sh! There she comes.

Enter VERA, *up center.* NANNIE *is directly behind her.*

VERA (*as she comes through the doors*). Thank you, Nannie.

PAULETTE (*embracing* VERA). Hello, Vera, you dear thing! Do you remember me?

VERA (*warmly*). Of course; you're Paulette, but (*holding* PAULETTE *off at arm's length*) you're so tall! You're as tall as—

PAULETTE. As a string bean, eh? I'd be real good with a little butter. Wouldn't I, Nannie?

NANNIE. Sure, the blarney of ye is butther enough.

(*The three girls laugh.*)

PAULETTE. This is my friend, Peg Moreton, Vera. Peg, this is Cousin Vera.

VERA (*shaking hands with* PEG). I'd like to call you Peg, if you don't mind.

PEG (*cordially*). Of course; everyone calls me Peg. Mother says they should call me Bill. (*Shrugs her shoulders and grins.*)

PAULETTE. It's horrid that mother is away. She'll be sorry, Vera.

VERA. I'm sorry, too; Nannie told me. (*She looks about.*) And you are having a party, too. I am afraid that I—

PAULETTE. You are really needed, really! You see,

Jean couldn't come, and we have nine places at table and nine tickets for the play to-night, so—

VERA (*putting an arm about* PAULETTE). You're so nice, Paulette, but I didn't bring a dress suitable for the theater. I only came because Dr. Blake wants me to sing to-morrow, and this will do for that, perfectly.

PAULETTE. Yes. I'm crazy to hear you sing again, but you'll have to come with us to-night, just the same. A dress is an easy matter. You're just Rena's size.

VERA. You won't think I'm horrid if I'd rather not; will you? I'll just stay here and practice a little, and have a talk over the phone with Dr. Blake. I don't know just what his plans are, but I hope that he will let me sing over at his pet settlement house on Hull Street. I sang there once, and I loved the poor old folks so!

PAULETTE. Oh! I supposed that you would sing at St. Paul's.

VERA. He mentioned that, but I'd so much prefer to go over there. I really think it gives the old men and women a treat—even *my* singing (*laughing*)—and I'd like to bring them a little pleasure on Easter Sunday.

PEG. Couldn't we go over there, too?

PAULETTE. We could and we shall. (*Whirling* VERA *about, then shaking* PEG.) But Rena and Iris, the dears, will spill a fit.

Enter RENA *at left in time to hear this speech.*

RENA. What an expression, Paulette! (*Advancing, holding out a hand out to* VERA.) Oh, how do you do, Vera? I wasn't told that you had arrived.

VERA. I told Nannie not to disturb you. (*Smiling.*) I shall be as quiet as a country mouse, if you'll let me stay to your party. I didn't know—

RENA. Oh, I'm sure we're very glad you came. Where are your bags?

VERA. Bags?

RENA. Your luggage.

VERA (*laughing and turning to* PAULETTE). Well, I am a country mouse. The tiny week-end bag that I brought is upstairs. Nannie took it up for me.

RENA. Oh! Well—of course (*she crosses to double doors*)—we'll arrange— Do come up and meet the girls now. They are dressing for dinner. You will want to change, of course.

VERA. I'm afraid I won't want to. I have explained to Paulette that I came to sing for Dr. Blake to-morrow, and I am quite dolled up enough in this.

RENA. It's very neat, I'm sure, but I can lend you something. Come.

PAULETTE. Vera's got the right idea. (*She comes and takes* VERA'S *arm.*) She's too sensible to wear satins when she's singing over at the Hull Street Settlement.

RENA. Hull Street?

PAULETTE (*beckoning slyly to* PEG, *who promptly joins* PAULETTE *and* VERA *up center*). Yes. Vera is going to sing over there at the Easter services for the old men and women.

RENA. No!

VERA (*nodding*). I hope that I can. Morning, afternoon, and evening.

PEG (*drawling*). And Paulette and I are going to chaperon her over.

RENA. Indeed! We'll discuss that later. Our plans are made.

VERA. Oh, don't let me be a nuisance. I'll go over with Mrs. Blake, of course.

PAULETTE. We'll discuss that later also. (*Smiling seraphically at* RENA.) Come on, Lieutenant Peg. You and I will take Vera up. (PAULETTE, PEG, *and* VERA *start to go out at center, but pause in the doorway.* PEG *grins back at* RENA, *and* PAULETTE *turns to speak to* RENA *over her shoulder.*) Awful hot weather, isn't it, old doll?

RENA (*with lips in a firm line, glares after the three a moment, then crosses swiftly to left and calls*). Iris! I-ris!

IRIS (*off left*). Yes?

RENA. Come here.

After a pause, enter IRIS *at left.*

IRIS. Vera's come?

RENA. Yes, and what do you think? (*Comes close to* IRIS *at left.*) She didn't bring a single dress! She's a sight in an old suit and a terrible hat, and she plans to sing over at the Hull Street Settlement all day long to-morrow, and upset everything!

IRIS. She isn't going to sing at St. Paul's at all?

RENA. No. What shall we do? (*Crosses to right petulantly.*) I won't go over there with her.

IRIS. Mother'll fuss if we don't treat Vera nicely.

RENA (*whirling about*). But the idea of looking like that on Easter Sunday!

IRIS. Of course—they're not rich—

RENA. Then she should stay at home! (*She goes up right, angrily shoving the piano bench farther under the piano, as she passes.*) My word! It's a mix-up. I could eat somebody!

Enter NANNIE, *up center, in time to hear the last remark.*

NANNIE. You'd be findin' me tough eatin', Miss Rena, I'm tellin' ye. (*Stands with arms akimbo.*)

RENA (*shortly*). What do you want, Nannie?

NANNIE. The Rev. Dr. Blake is callin', sure, to see Miss Vera one little minute, says himself. He says she has the voice of an angel, and, sure, she has the look of an angel beside—bliss her swate face!

IRIS. Mercy, Nannie! I never heard you praise a girl before.

NANNIE. Where would I have found one to praise before, I ask ye?

Enter PAULETTE, *up center, behind* NANNIE, *giving the latter a little shove in order to get into the room.*

PAULETTE. Wow! Nannie, that kills me dead! (*She leans upon* NANNIE *and closes her eyes.*)

NANNIE. It's dead weight ye are, if ye're askin' me. (*Heaves* PAULETTE *off.*)

RENA (*with gesture of dismissal*). Vera is upstairs.

PAULETTE. What does Dr. Blake want, Nannie?

NANNIE. He'd be askin' her to sing at St. Paul's, but she wants only to cheer the ould relics over at the sittlement, bliss her!

RENA. The idea! Well, she'll sing at St. Paul's; it's more fitting for our cousin, and she'll be dressed decently, too. (*Marches to left.*)

NANNIE. Dressed dacently, is it? When she's already dressed in the white robes of one of God's Easter lilies, herself—so good and sweet and pretty as one of them, begorra! With her face shinin' like the sun on Easter mornin'! (*Turns to go, up center.*)

PAULETTE. You're a poet, Nannie. (*Applauds loudly.*)

Enter PEG *quietly, up center, slipping past* NANNIE *and crossing to sit on piano bench.*

RENA. You may go, Nannie. We weren't asking for your opinion.

NANNIE (*comfortably*). Sure, ye can have it without the askin', anny time at all.

RENA (*stamping her foot*). Go up and tell Miss Vera to come down at once.

NANNIE. Sure, I'll be tellin' her to come down when she plazes! (*Stamps out at center.*)

RENA (*swinging both fists in exasperation as she*

drops into a chair at left). I wish I could discharge her this minute.

IRIS. Oh, Rena, we couldn't.

PAULETTE (*flopping on* PEG'S *lap on bench*). Them's dangerous feelings, grandma. Better squelch 'em. (*She giggles.*) Come on, Peg. We've got to hold the fort. (*She pulls* PEG *to her feet.*) There's going to be fireworks. They're (*pointing thumb over her shoulder, indicates* IRIS *and* RENA) the fire, and we're (*slapping herself and* PEG *on the back*) the works! (*Waves a hand back at* IRIS *and* RENA *as she and* PEG *go out, up center. Their giggles mingle with the voices of the guests in the hall as*—)

MIRIAM, ELSA, DORRY, *and* FRANCES *enter, up center.*

IRIS. Oh, Miriam, such a sweet dress!

MIRIAM. A copy of an imported model. (*Sits on bench.*)

RENA. It's the darlingest thing! Don't you think so, Frances?

FRANCES (*near fireplace*). Yes.

IRIS. Isn't the color lovely, Elsa?

ELSA (*sits in desk chair*). It makes her look green by daylight.

IRIS. Why, Elsa!

ELSA. Well, it does. Her blue is lots more becoming.

MIRIAM (*icily*). I'm sorry you don't like it, Elsa. Everyone can't have such a nice brown complexion like yours that goes well with green. (*Sniffs.*)

DORRY. Isn't your dress a little long for what they are wearing, Elsa?

IRIS (*rushing into the breach*). Oh, girls, you should see the hats that Elsa brought me! O-oh! (*Pirouettes joyfully.*)

RENA. Elsa, you shouldn't. But probably you girls

can fit Vera out. (*She lowers her voice and comes nearer the group.*) My dears! It's dreadful.

MIRIAM. You don't mean that she has only that suit with her?

IRIS. That's every last stitch she brought. For Easter Sunday! Imagine!

FRANCES (*timidly*). She's sweet, though.

DORRY (*patronizingly*). I could lend her some things, but she doesn't seem to care about her appearance at all.

ELSA (*bluntly*). Doesn't have to; she's got brains instead.

RENA. My word! (*Turning upon* ELSA.) People don't have to look at your brains, but they do have to see your clothes.

IRIS. I'd rather be easy to look at than hard to understand. (*She bows to all.*) How's that? (*All the others laugh at her epigram.*)

DORRY (*still laughing*). So would I. But I won't admit that I am brainless because I try to look well.

Enter PEG, *up center. She stands in the doorway.* PAULETTE *peers in over her shoulder.*

MIRIAM. Neither will I. It takes brains to get just the pleasing effect—brains!

PAULETTE (*from doorway*). Brains? Who wants brains? I have plenty to spare.

(PEG *and* PAULETTE *advance into the room and go to left.*)

RENA. Why aren't you two dressed for dinner?

PAULETTE. Ain't going to dress.

RENA. What? (*She assumes an outraged air.*)

PAULETTE. Now, look here, grandma! Come down off the chandelier. Vera does not relish wearing borrowed clothes, so we are keeping her company in our

blouses and skirts. (*She cavorts for their admiration.*) Aren't we cunning little things?

IRIS. You don't have to be shabby; it's just put on.

PAULETTE (*sweetly*). You don't have to be cross; it's just natural. Peg and I are going down to see Dr. Blake; he'll like us. Come on, old egg. (*Exeunt* PEG *and* PAULETTE, *up center.*)

FRANCES (*timidly*). Perhaps we—shouldn't have fixed up—

RENA. Nonsense. We'd have to dress for the theater, anyway.

DORRY. However will she—?

RENA (*determined*). She'll simply have to wear one of our dresses. One girl shan't upset the plans of eight.

IRIS. To think of her wanting to sing over in that place when she could sing in a fashionable church like St. Paul's!

RENA. She shall sing at St. Paul's, too. I shall tell her I want her to.

ELSA. She looks capable of doing as she wants, I think.

FRANCES. She is awfully sweet. Maybe we could go over there with her.

RENA (*coming to put an arm around* FRANCES' *shoulder, laughingly*). Frances, you're a blessed infant. But you wouldn't enjoy missing the Easter crowd, and going over there where you'd smell garlic all day. Ugh! No, indeed; things are going to be just as I planned. This is my Easter party.

IRIS (*looking off up center*). Why doesn't Nannie announce dinner? We don't want to miss the first act of the play.

RENA (*following* IRIS). I'll hurry her. She does as she pleases when mother is gone. (*Exit, up center.*)

IRIS (*chuckling*). And she does as she pleases when mother is here, too.

(*The other girls laugh.*)

Enter PEG, PAULETTE, *and* VERA, *up center, all laughing.*

PAULETTE. I've got a job, and so has Peg. I've got a job!

IRIS (*crossing to* VERA, *smiling, with extended hand*). I'm glad to see you, Vera. I was out when you came. How is Aunt Molly?

VERA. Mother is well, thank you. She sends her love.

PAULETTE. But listen, everybody, I've got a job, and so has Peg. I've got a real job, I say. (*Marches across room to extreme right and back again.*)

ELSA. So you've said, a couple o' hundred times.

VERA. These girls have teased Dr. Blake to let them do something over at the settlement. So he said they might usher in the old folks and find seats for them. (*Sits at left and* PEG *sits on arm of her chair.*)

PAULETTE. What do you think of that?

IRIS. Rena will say, "no."

PAULETTE. Rena will waste her oxygen, for I've got a job. (*Sits on other arm of* VERA'S *chair.*)

IRIS. She won't want you mingling with those dirty people over there.

VERA (*leaning forward earnestly*). They aren't dirty, Iris. The dear old ladies with their shaking, knotted old hands and their nice clean aprons, and their shawls pulled around their tired old faces. (*Pleadingly.*) Oh, they aren't dirty, Iris.

DORRY (*after an uncomfortable pause*). What do they care for music?

RENA *enters, up center, and remains quietly in the doorway to listen.*

VERA. They love it. You should see my old soldiers at the Home where I sing every week. They laugh and cry and clap their hands and keep time with their feet

and canes. (*She laughs and looks around upon them all brightly.*) I can hardly wait for my turn to sing for them!

RENA. You don't get much salary for singing there; do you?

VERA (*looking at* RENA *in surprise*). Why, I don't get any pay for singing! I wouldn't miss singing for my old men for a fortune; they like it so much.

PAULETTE. They'd pay most of us De Voyds not to sing, I guess.

IRIS. It's nice of you, of course, but I should think you would rather sing at a place like St. Paul's, where the educated people can appreciate your music.

VERA. That's just it: They can appreciate and pay for much better music than I can give them, but the poor folks have to get along with beginners like me. I am going to sing Dr. Blake's new Easter hymn over at the settlement to-morrow; it's lovely. You knew he composed, Rena?

RENA. Yes.

PAULETTE. Sing it; will you, Vera?

VERA (*rising*). I'm sorry, but I'd rather practice it a little more first, if you don't mind, but the words are something like this. (*Quite unaffectedly, standing at center, she recites reverently.*)

> Hope and be glad, ye sinful and sorrowful,
> See where He waits with loving arms wide!
> Lo, in the Easter dawning resplendent,
> Christ is arisen, all glorified!

(PAULETTE *slides over to* VERA'S *side, and slips a hand into* VERA'S; FRANCES *gazes raptly at* VERA; PEG *puts a hand up to cover her face; the others look uncomfortable.* VERA *smiles down upon* PAULETTE *and goes back to her chair.*)

FRANCES. It's lovely.

VERA. Hope! They will like to hear about that over at Hull Street. Don't you think so?

PAULETTE. Hope is the real meaning of Easter; isn't it, Vera?

VERA. Hope and rebuilding and making over; that's what Dr. Blake said.

ELSA. Well, a few of us will have some making over to do, if we expect to have the real Easter spirit! Take it from me.

Enter NANNIE, *up center.*

FRANCES. We just don't think what Easter really means.

NANNIE. Easter, is it? Easter in this place just means a month or more of crazy runnin' round to stores, begorra, and tryin' on fine feathers and kapin' the dinner waitin' ivery night o' me life!

RENA. That will do, Nannie.

PAULETTE. We're coming, Nannie, and if you'll be real nice, we'll let you come over to Hull Street with us to-morrow, and you can help to cheer up the relics, as you call them. We're going to.

NANNIE (*unbelieving*). You! The three of ye!

PEG. I am. I'm going to find the softest seats for my old men, and I'm going to squander my month's allowance on ice cream for them afterwards.

(PAULETTE *hugs* PEG, *and both rock with laughter.*)

IRIS (*coming slowly to* RENA). We could do something for them, too. Couldn't we, Rena? Mother would like us to.

FRANCES. Let me help, too. (*She crosses shyly and stands behind* VERA'S *chair.*)

ELSA. It wouldn't hurt any one of us to do something worth while once in a blue moon, besides changing from one dress to another and having our hair permanent-waved. (*Rising.*) I warn you, fellow citizens,

immediately after dinner, I shall take up a collection in Nannie's biggest dish pan for Dr. Blake's pet charities.

NANNIE. Sure. I'll be bringin' up the washtubs, if ye'd be sayin' the word.

(*All laugh.*)

VERA (*rising*). Oh, how wonderful you all are! Dr. Blake will be so glad.

RENA (*a little doubtfully*). Of course we're glad to help. Would you go, Miriam? (*Takes* MIRIAM *and* DORRY *by the arm.*)

MIRIAM. I shouldn't mind going.

DORRY. Would my rose voile be too elaborate to wear over there?

IRIS. I should think it would. How about it, Vera?

MIRIAM. Goodness! I didn't bring anything plain. (*Shrugs.*)

VERA. Do wear your pretty things, girls. The dear old ladies will talk about them for weeks after. They so seldom see anything pretty.

RENA. It may be fun. We'll all go, if it suits everybody.

VERA. Oh, that is so good of you all! Thank you for being so nice to a country cousin. You are all dear! You have the real Easter spirit in this house. (*She beams upon them all.*)

NANNIE. Yis. (*She lays the irony on thickly.*) It was after comin' into the house when ye came through the door, Miss Vera, good luck to ye! (*She sets her hands upon her hips and glares at the others.*) Now will ye all be comin' to dinner before Easter itself is upon us?

PAULETTE. Sure. (*Seizes* NANNIE *about the waist.*) This is the way I am going to usher my old men in. Come on, Nannie, old Easter egg! (*She puts out her free hand to* VERA *who takes it smilingly.*)

(RENA, *with* MIRIAM *and* DORRY, *come up right,* PEG

takes VERA'S *free arm, and* FRANCES *and* ELSA *come from left.*)

VERA. O-oh, I am so glad that I feel like singing. (*She breaks off to laugh.*) You'll have to tell me, Paulette, if I begin singing at dinner.

NANNIE (*reaching out a hand to touch* VERA'S *hair tenderly*). Sing, bliss your blue eyes, sing, for there's Easter in your heart!

CURTAIN

THE EASTER SPIRIT

(*Recitation for a boy*)

The boy, rather small, should be of the mischievous type. He strolls in with his hands in his pockets and his cap on the back of his head.

I have got an awful temper!
(*Wags his head fiercely.*)
Fire up just as quick as "scat!"
(*Snaps his fingers.*)
But at Easter time—it's funny—
(*Grins and averts his head.*)
I'd just like to quit all that.
(*Nods decisively, thrusts chest out, and walks across front of stage.*)

Mother says this Easter season
Means a change, a growing up,
(*Stretches arms high.*)
So I gave my word I'd try it,
And there'll be no slowing up.
(*Fist in palm, nods.*)

(*Suddenly he grins mischievously and comes nearer front.*)

I'll sure be my teachers' blessing,
(*Clasps his hands demurely.*)
And I'll eat my lessons whole.
(*Pretends to swallow a big bite.*)
But (*looks cautiously about, then speaks lower*)—oh, boy, at that first ball game,
I'll be there to call the roll!

(*Laughs and springs forward, low, as if to catch a ball, then thrusts hands in pockets and saunters, whistling. He pauses down left.*)

I'm a-goin' to take things easy—
Not bé fussed by little jokes;
But that Walt Lee's *such* a nuisance,
(*Frowns and doubles his fists.*)
I'll give him a coupla pokes!
(*Leans forward belligerently.*)

(*He walks toward center front, grinning and shrugging.*)

'Course, my ma says, "Be forgiving;
Don't return a bully's blows!"
(*Shakes his head virtuously.*)
"Turn the other cheek," they tell ya—
(*He sniffs scornfully.*)
But I've only got *one* nose!
(*He feels his nose, to be sure it is safe.*)

(*He saunters toward right front.*)

I'm not really such a tightwad—
Pilin' up a great, big hoard;
(*Right hand rises higher and higher, measuring.*)

But Bill's gotta pay that nickel!
(*Shakes his head threateningly.*)
Does he think I'm Mr. Ford?

(*Jigs to center, stops, grins, smacks his lips, and rubs his stomach.*)

When there's chocolate cake, oh, gorry!
(*Closes his eyes tight, raptly.*)
Mother says I run amuck!
(*Chuckles.*)
But there's Hal and Pete and Charlie!
(*Counts on fingers, frowning.*)
Grab it! (*Lunges forward, and grabs something quickly.*) Or you're out o' luck!

(*He flops both hands scornfully as he walks slowly to right, near exit. With his hands deep in his pockets, he studies the audience with a wise grin.*)

Maybe now, my Easter spirit
Ain't the kind you folks would praise;
(*He shrugs carelessly, half turning away.*)
We—ell! (*Drawlingly.*) There's lots o' time to change it,
(*Backs to exit.*)
'Twon't be Easter for two (*holds up two fingers*) days!

(*Grins and ducks out.*)

THE EASTER FASHION PARADE

(Musical exercise for five boys and five girls)

CHARACTERS

PATRICK
MOLLY
EIGHT EASTER PARADERS

COSTUMES.—Patrick wears a sober black suit, and is made up to look middle-aged with gray hair and lines about his eyes and mouth. Molly wears a rather old-fashioned dress, and also appears middle-aged. Three of the girls in the chorus of Easter paraders, at their first appearance, wear tight-waisted dresses with puffed sleeves and long skirts with trains. Small, round hats, each having a feather or flower in front, are pinned with a long hatpin to the top of a pad hidden under the hat so that the hat has the effect of riding the hair like a boat on the crest of a wave. If the girls have bobbed hair, they should carefully tuck it up under their hats, or supplement it with artificial hair. The fourth girl of the chorus is dressed as an old lady, in a black dress, and has gray hair covered by a black bonnet with ribbons which tie under the chin. At their second appearance, the girls are in extreme modern attire, the old lady the most modish of all. All wear gay scarfs tied about bobbed hair, the gray hair boasting the gaudiest scarf. If desired, the modern costume may be worn under the old-fashioned one, to expedite the change. For their last appearance, the girls all wear boys' suits and caps, and carry canes. At their first appearance, three of the boys in the chorus wear long-tailed coats and derby hats. The fourth, who is the partner of the old lady, wears a black skull cap, walks with a cane, and may have a venerable-looking beard, if desired. At their second appearance, all the boys wear light suits

and straw hats with colored bands, and swing jaunty sticks. The last time they come in, they wear short trousers, bright-colored coats, and large, floppy straw hats trimmed with flowers or feathers, and carry gay sunshades.

The stage has two entrances, up right and up left.

Enter PATRICK *at right, as* MOLLY *enters at left, while pianist plays a measure or two of "McSorley's Twins."*

PATRICK (*raising hat to* MOLLY, *sings*).
Ah, good mornin', Miss Molly, I'm glad that we met,
For the street is made bright by your smiles!
MOLLY (*as they meet at center, smiling*).
Away with your blarney now, Patrick McCoy,
I'm out viewin' the new Easter styles.
PATRICK.
But the fashions we wore were much neater, I'm sure,
MOLLY (*scornfully*).
And the maidens more sinsible, too!
PATRICK (*backing to right*).
Oh! I'm seein' again that fine Easter parade,
MOLLY (*backing to left*).
When we swung down the avenue.

Two couples of the PARADERS *enter from right, arm in arm, and at the same time, the other two couples enter at left, and all march to center. Simultaneously,* PATRICK, *at right, lifts his hat to* MOLLY, *at left, and they step in to meet each other at center.* MOLLY *takes* PATRICK'S *arm, and facing rear, they march up center followed by the* PARADERS, *the first couple from the right leading, the first couple from left next, and so on. They march up center rear, turn left, come down left side of stage and across front, singing as they march. On the last line of their song, which is sung to the chorus music of "McSorley's Twins," they form a*

straight line across front, face the audience, and on the last note of song, all make a deep bow.

PATRICK, MOLLY, *and* PARADERS (*singing chorus together*).

Sure, the bright Easter was shmilin' that day
On the gallants and maidens so staid;
On the grandmas' black bonnets, and belles' flow'ry hats,
Arrah! 'Twas a fine Easter parade!

(*After the bow, the* PARADERS *go off, in couples, at their respective sides, seeming to be chatting and laughing, while the last four measures of the chorus music are played to permit* PATRICK *and* MOLLY *to regain their places at lower right and left corners, as before. The stanza music begins again, and* MOLLY *sings first.*)

MOLLY (*with a sigh, sings*).

But the times, they have changed, and those styles are no more,

PATRICK (*sings*).

And the cry of the age is for speed!

MOLLY.

Faith, the girls' crowning glory is all shorn away,
(*Pointing to hair.*)

PATRICK (*dryly*).

And most of their skirts, too, indeed!

MOLLY (*strolling toward center*).

If a woman won't carry a vanity case,
She's a back number and an old maid;
(*Backs to left.*)

PATRICK (*strutting to center*).

Begorra, my best blacks are nowhere at all
In the Easter fashion parade.
(*Backs to right.*)

As the music of the chorus begins, the PARADERS *en-*

ter, in couples as before, this time in modern dress. As the first couple from the left reach center, they turn left and march to center left, followed by the second couple from the left and the two couples from the right. At center left, the line of couples turn and march to the right side of the stage, singing as they go. They repeat this, crossing the stage until the song is finished. PATRICK *and* MOLLY, *instead of joining them as before, stroll together across the front, always going in the opposite direction from the* PARADERS, *and singing with them.*

PATRICK, MOLLY, *and* PARADERS (*singing, all together*).

Oh, the avenue looks like a garden, 'tis true,
And the girls are in rainbow array;
There aren't any grandmas; they're all sweet sixteen,
In the Easter parade of to-day!

(*Exeunt* PARADERS, *at their respective sides as before, but more quickly.*)

(*While the pianist plays the music of the chorus,* PATRICK *and* MOLLY *may dance an Irish jig, an eccentric comedy dance, or a simple country dance, prolonging it sufficiently to give the* PARADERS *time to make their change of costume. At close of dance, the pair jig down center front and sing another stanza to the same air as before.*)

PATRICK.

Faith, I'm dreadin' to think of what may be in store!

MOLLY.

Oh, the changes that tin years may bring!

PATRICK (*frowning*).

Sure, the wimmen may rule us poor, hard-working min,
(*Shakes his head.*)

MOLLY (*belligerently, advancing a step toward* PATRICK).

Faith, that might be a very good thing!
PATRICK (*coaxingly, holding his hand out to* MOLLY *and coming to center*).
Arrah! Miss Molly, I mint no offinse!
MOLLY (*taking his hand, at center*).
Then we'll not be a-havin' a row;
PATRICK (*leading* MOLLY *to right*).
In fancy I'm seein' that Easter parade
MOLLY (*nodding, smilingly*).
Of twenty-five years from now.

Enter PARADERS, *in couples from their respective sides, in the costume for third appearance. They cross the stage toward right and form a straight line through center. The girls are quite businesslike and brisk, the boys languishing and coy.*

(*During the following stanza,* PATRICK *and* MOLLY, *straightening themselves as if to throw off the years, dance to center with lively steps. Half the* PARADERS *take a step to the right, the other half a step to the left, making room for* PATRICK *and* MOLLY *in the middle of the line. All dance down front in a straight line, singing.*)

PATRICK, MOLLY, *and* PARADERS (*singing, all together*).
Oh, the avenue looks like a different place!
Oh, the changes the long years have made!
But we're never old fogies, and we'll still keep step
(*All at front.*)
In the Easter fashion parade.

(*All bow to the audience. The last eight measures of the chorus music are repeated, and all dance hilariously off at right.*)

HALF A DOZEN EASTER EGGS

(Drill for six small boys)

COSTUMES.—The boys wear one-piece suits of white cotton material, padded about the waistline so that their bodies resemble large eggs. White skull caps fit well down over their ears. Their faces are painted white.

The stage has two entrances: one up right, and the other directly opposite it, up left. Up center, a little way from the back wall, is a short slide of the kind used on children's playgrounds. Its high end, which is toward the rear, stands only a little higher than the boys' heads. The low end, nearest the audience, terminates in a large box fastened securely to the floor. The box should be long enough and high enough to conceal the six boys when they are huddled together, sitting down. One side of the box is removed to allow the boys to drop into it from the slide. The lid is hinged loosely to the side facing the audience, so that, when it is flung up and outward, there is revealed on its inner side the inscription printed in large letters: "Easter Eggs. Strictly Fresh!" Hidden in the box are six chicken headdresses made of yellow crêpe paper, with bills of cardboard.

As the music of "Solomon Levi" begins, the six eggs enter in single file, three at right and three at left, and march toward the center rear, using the following step: With the hand nearest the front of the stage curved high over the head and the other hand stretched out low as in a pose for diving, they take one long step with the foot nearest front, at the same time lunging forward with the body. They straighten quickly, bring their hands to their sides, and take one short, stealthy step, looking cautiously about the stage.

Still facing the center rear, they pause as though listening, then jerk their heads first to one side, then to the other, as if indicating "no." They repeat the

forward lunge, followed by the short step and head-shaking, still moving in the direction of the high end of the slide up center rear. They thrust forward the foot nearest the front, resting it on the heel, the sole of the foot in the air, then bring the foot down flat with a smart stamp, and repeat with the other foot.

Continuing with this step, they advance until the leaders are near the high end of the slide, in such a position that they can easily see each other across the slide, then pause, with the outside foot thrust forward and balanced on the heel. All bring the forefinger of the right hand to the top of the head in an impish salute to the opposite eggs.

The leaders now face front and march down the stage, while the others march to the slide, then turn and follow them, all using the same heel thrust and stamp, as before. After the fourth step, all pause, with heel out, and repeat the salute, each line looking toward the side of the stage from which they entered. After the next four steps, they repeat the salute, all looking toward the center.

When the leaders reach the center front, the one on the left turns left, and the one on the right turns to the right, and they lead their respective lines across the front of the stage until all are in one straight line, when they turn to face the audience. Thrusting the right heel out with the sole of the foot sticking up in the air, they salute the audience with the forefingers of both hands at the top of the head, at the same time grinning impishly and jerking the knees down, then up, several times. Stooping slightly, all clutch the sides of the knees with both hands, open their eyes wide. and peer about with a cautious expression.

Then the three at right face right and the three at left face left. Thrusting the foot farthest from the audience a short distance ahead along the floor and dragging the other foot up to it with the hand, they take four steps toward their respective sides of the stage.

Then, turning swiftly to face center front, they slide forward in the same manner until the two leaders come together with a bump. Each of the other eggs bumps into the one in front of him.

They remain huddled together for four counts, and as they open out the lines to resume the movements of the drill, all assume a look of suffering. The two lines face right and left respectively, as before. Each boy places the hand nearest the audience against that side of his body and lays the other hand over it, to indicate a pain in the side.

With a stamping step, they march to opposite lower corners of the stage, turn and go up their respective sides, changing hands to the opposite side of the body after the fourth step and bending the body. At the end of the next four steps, they place the right hand on the back at the waistline and the left hand over the stomach. After four more steps, they change hands.

As they reach upper right and left corners respectively and turn to cross rear, they press both hands against the back, and bend the body lower. The music becomes slower, and they take four short steps toward the slide, then pause and turn faces toward the audience with a grimace of pain.

Pressing both hands to the stomach and bending still lower, they take four more short steps toward the slide, the music becoming still slower. All face front in a straight, horizontal line, bend double, and shake the head twice to the right and twice to the left, then drop it low. They hold this position during four counts.

The pianist now strikes up "Rig-a-Jig." At the first note, all straighten up like a flash, and grinning, give the impish salute with both hands to heads, as before. With long, high leaps, the three on the left of the slide spring over to left center, and the three on the right spring to right center. All jig with abandonment and glee, each group going round and round in a wide circle.

They dance furiously, as the music quickens, with

elbows thrust out, fists keeping time to the music, and grins on their faces. Each egg tries to outdo the others. The music grows slower, and they work over toward the slide, jigging more and more slowly until they reach the slide and end the dance leaning together, back to back, one group on either side of the slide. They sag limply against each other, as though in weariness, and hold this huddled position during four counts.

The pianist begins the music of "Solomon Levi" again. Using the step used at their entrance, the two eggs nearest the back of the stage lead their respective groups by spiral lines toward the slide, away from it toward the side of the stage, in toward the center again, and in this manner down to the front.

Turning, they work back up stage in the same way, and when they reach the rear, form two horizontal straight lines facing the audience. They grin and salute the audience as before.

At a chord from the piano, all assume a listening attitude, raise the index finger nearest the center in a gesture of warning, and poise, leaning forward, for four counts. Holding an imaginary egg-beater in the left hand and beating vigorously with the right, they take one cautious step forward, then stop, wide-eyed.

Holding up index finger of hand farthest from center, they lean forward again, and poise for four counts. Taking one step forward as before and holding an imaginary bowl in the curve of the left arm, they stir rapidly with the right hand.

After a slight pause, all sidle toward the slide, still facing front, while lifting imaginary forks daintily to their mouths with the left hand. They pause, then repeat the sidling step, lifting the fork with the right hand. Pausing once more, all thrust both hands behind them, shaking their heads in a gesture of refusal. They hold this position for four counts.

Then, suddenly, as the music quickens, the three at the right side slide to extreme right and bump into the

right wing, while the three on the left slide to extreme left and bump into the left wing. All remain in huddled position for four counts.

As the music becomes slower, the two leaders march down to the front, along opposite sides, each followed by his own group. They repeat the painful march which followed the bump at center front, and end in a line across the front of the stage, three on each side of the center. All salute the audience as before.

The pianist now begins to play "Rig-a-Jig." At the first note, the two lines divide and jig around opposite sides of the stage to the rear in time to the music, and come to a halt in two lines along the rear, facing the slide.

The left-hand leader, who is nearest the slide, runs to the stepladder, climbs it quickly, stands on the top with his arms spread wide, for four counts, then sits and slides down the slide into the box. He should crawl well over to one side of the box and remain crouched down out of sight, and should slip on his chicken headdress carefully, so as not to be seen by the audience.

The leader on the right follows immediately, then comes the second egg on the left, and so on from alternate sides until all are in the box. Each boy, as he enters the box, should be careful to move far enough to the side to leave plenty of room for the newcomers as they slide in. All don their headdresses as quickly as possible.

When the last egg is in the box, and all have their headdresses on, a loud chord is struck on the piano. The egg who is nearest the center of the box flings up the lid, which falls outward toward the audience, and reveals the inscription on its under side.

All at once, the eggs pop up into view of the audience, wearing solemn expressions on their faces. The music ceases, and all the eggs, in unison, cheep softly, "Peep! Peep!" The curtains are drawn, or, if there are no

curtains, the boys may climb out of the box and scamper off up right to quick music.

AWAKENING

(Dialogue for eleven boys and eleven girls)

CHARACTERS

Boys	*Girls*
SEEKER	FAITH
WISE MAN	LOVE
CYNIC	FOOLISH VIRGIN
DESPAIR	JOY
WASTER	HOPE
SIX SPIRITS OF DARKNESS	SIX SPIRITS OF LIGHT

COSTUMES.—The Seeker, an older boy, wears a tunic of rose color, and sandals. The Wise Man, played by a tall boy, has long gray hair, a gray beard, and wears a long, flowing gray robe. The Cynic is dressed in a belted brown tunic, and wears dark glasses. The Waster wears a clown suit of yellow and a pointed cap to match. His wide sleeves are filled with rolls of the narrow, colored paper streamers used by merrymakers at carnivals. Despair is wrapped from head to foot in a mantle and hood of black, only his eyes being visible. The Spirits of Darkness, who are very small boys, are similarly dressed in black. Faith wears a classic robe of pale blue and carries a slender silver torch. This may be topped by an electric bulb in candle flame shape, connected to a battery within the torch; or, if this cannot be easily arranged, the flame may be simulated by a twist of flame-colored crêpe paper. Love, who is a small girl, wears a frilly dress of red, and has a red rose in her hair. The Foolish Virgin wears a classic gown of

green, and carries a replica of an ancient lamp, unlighted. The lamp may be fashioned from cardboard, or simulated by an old-fashioned gravy boat if one is available. Joy's dress consists of fringed crêpe paper of the seven primary colors, sewed to a white foundation having a sleeveless bodice and short, full skirt. Long streamers of the rainbow colors are fastened to her wrists and shoulders so that they fly out when she moves. She has a headdress made of seven narrow, petal-shaped pieces of crêpe paper, one of each color, wired to stand out so as to form a frame for her face. Hope wears a classic gown of soft white material and carries a single Easter lily. The Spirits of Light, small girls, wear similar gowns, and each carries a lily.

SCENE: *Draperies of some neutral color form the background of the stage. They are drawn back at center rear to show a narrow door or tall gate. There is another entrance up right, in the draperies, a third up left, and a fourth down right. From the door or gate up center, a narrow path, bordered by stones, and strewn with small, sharp rocks and thorny branches, leads straight down to center front. Another path, wide and smooth and bordered with flowers, begins in the upper right corner and winds across the stage to the lower right corner, intersecting the narrow path at center. The floor of the stage may be covered with stage grass or green matting to represent grass. The time is spring.*

The SEEKER *enters, up center, and stands in the doorway, looking out toward audience, smiling and expectant, while at the right, with arms folded, the* WISE MAN *enters and stands near the door. The* SEEKER *steps out of doorway, closing door behind him, and turns to* WISE MAN.

SEEKER. I am the Seeker, setting out on the adven-

ture of life, to find Hope and abide with her. Who are you, old man?

WISE MAN. I am the Wise Man (*he smiles wearily*), though some there are who call me fool.

SEEKER (*with his hand out in friendly way*). You look wondrous wise. Perhaps you will tell me which path to choose. There are two, and I am troubled. (*Points to left.*)

WISE MAN (*stepping into narrow path beside* SEEKER). This is the path of righteousness, straight and narrow, and strewn with thorns and stones.

SEEKER. Ah, thorns and stones! (*He backs a little.*) A hard way for sandaled feet! (*He puts out an experimental toe toward the other path, turning to* WISE MAN.) And that other?

WISE MAN (*with hands out to warn him not to go*). That other is the wide and winding path of evil, flower-decked and cushioned with soft grasses.

SEEKER (*smiling*). A tempting road, Wise Man—a luring road! (*Reaching out an arm far, as if to pluck a flower from the other path.*)

WISE MAN. But you go to seek Hope?

SEEKER (*eagerly*). Yes, yes. I must find Hope, else how can I endure life?

WISE MAN. Then know that Hope never walks that path. (*Pointing left sternly.*) Choose, Seeker, choose. (*He turns away indifferently and goes to right.*)

SEEKER (*pleadingly*). Oh, do not abandon me, wise counselor! I choose the narrow path, but alas! I am weak, and, lest my feet stumble and stray, I pray you stay with me.

WISE MAN (*facing* SEEKER *kindly*). I have many adventurers to aid, but, if you wish a guide, there is always Faith.

SEEKER. Who is Faith?

WISE MAN *beckons off right, and* FAITH *enters, up*

right, carrying a torch. She pauses just within the entrance and holds her torch high.

FAITH.

I am Faith, the light of ages,
And your footsteps I shall guide,
Till you win in paths of virtue
Lovely Hope to be your bride.

SEEKER (*taking* FAITH *by the hand and leading her into the narrow path*). Ah, you are the Faith of my fathers! They found Hope. With you to guide me, I, too, shall find sweet Hope. Come.

(*The* WISE MAN *goes out at right, nodding his head in a satisfied way.* FAITH *and the* SEEKER *take a few steps along the narrow path toward the front of the stage,* FAITH *walking a little ahead with torch held high.*)

Enter LOVE, *at right, smiling, and with arms outstretched.*

SEEKER. And who is this happy little stranger?

LOVE (*at the* SEEKER'S *side*).

I am Love; I follow Faith.
He who walks with her aright
Cherishes eternal Love,
Leading him to Hope so bright.

SEEKER (*looking all about*). Why, the whole world is the brighter for your coming. (*He takes* LOVE'S *hand, and they go as far as center, where the paths intersect.*) Ah! Do you hear the enticing sounds from yonder path? How beautiful the flowers are! (*He sighs.*)

FAITH (*turning to face him*). But Hope treads the path of righteousness. Go onward. (*Sternly points ahead with the torch.*)

LOVE (*tugging at his hand*). Yes. Hope is my sister, and I know where she dwells. So come. (*She runs on a step or two, then comes back and takes his hand again coaxingly.*)

Enter the CYNIC *from left, walking slowly, with slouching and careless gait.*

SEEKER. Stop, Love. Wait, Faith. Who is this? (*Points to the* CYNIC, *who is smiling wryly at him.*)

FAITH. He who hesitates is lost. Go onward. (*Makes a gesture of command.*)

LOVE (*alarmed*). Oh, come, come!

CYNIC (*coming to wide path and laughing*). Ho, ho, Seeker! You are tied to their pretty apron strings, eh? Ho, ho!

SEEKER. Why do you deride these fair guides, mocker?

CYNIC. Guides! (*Snaps his fingers scornfully.*) Don't be a fool. They are false deceivers—false!

SEEKER (*threateningly*). You dare—?

CYNIC (*snapping fingers again*). A fig for your threats! I know them. Faith, like a reed shaken by the wind, and Love—humph! A will-o'-the-wisp!

SEEKER (*distressed*). No! They are true, true, true! (*Looks defiantly at the* CYNIC.)

CYNIC (*coming near to the* SEEKER, *where the paths intersect*). Don't be a fool. I know them.

SEEKER (*turning to* FAITH *and* LOVE, *then back to the* CYNIC, *indecisively*). What shall I do? What shall I do?

CYNIC. Come over here. At least the path is smooth, and sometimes we meet Pleasure. And—there is always Forgetting! (*Laughs loudly.*)

SEEKER. Oh, I don't know! Whither shall I turn? If they be false, indeed! (*Looks back at* FAITH.) If Faith be a reed— (FAITH *steps back toward right.*) If Love be a will-o'-the-wisp—

(LOVE *sadly turns away from* SEEKER.)

Suddenly the WISE MAN *appears, up extreme right, his right hand upraised.*

WISE MAN. Seeker, beware! The Cynic lies. He chose the wide path, and the flames of his youth's ideals are ashes, and the fruit of his dreams is bitter. So he lies, because he envies you Faith and Love. Seeker, beware!

CYNIC (*turning furiously toward* WISE MAN *and shaking his fists*). Begone, old croaker! (*Extends a hand to the* SEEKER.) Come. He is old, and life is done for him, so he envies you youth. Come. Feel how soft the path is.

SEEKER (*one foot in the wide path*). Yes. You are right. (*Exeunt the* WISE MAN, FAITH, *and* LOVE, *up right. The* SEEKER *steps into the wide path.*) I am young, young. (*Flings his arms high, in a gesture of freedom.*) And will you lead me to Hope?

DESPAIR *enters slowly at left, followed by one shrouded* SPIRIT OF DARKNESS.

CYNIC (*laughing loudly*). Hope? Nonsense! There is only Forgetting, and (*turns and points to* DESPAIR) Despair.

DESPAIR (*in muffled tones*).

Bleak, black Despair,
Every hour—every—where!

SEEKER (*shrinking back, his hands thrown up before his face*). Who is that? (*Turns and looks back, arms out, then looks blank.*) And Faith and Love! Where are they? (*Looks back again, then cries out.*) Gone!

CYNIC (*shrugging*). You are well rid of the false creatures. This one is—

DESPAIR (*as before*).

Bleak, black Despair,
Every hour—every—where!

Enter noiselessly a second SPIRIT OF DARKNESS *at left, huddling close to first.*

SEEKER. Ugh! He is ugly, and I am cold, and the brightness is gone out of the world. (*Shudders and hides his face.*)

CYNIC (*pulling at the* SEEKER'S *sleeve*). Oh, come! There will be gay times before us. Come, and we shall look for Pleasure. Ah, here comes the Waster!

Enter the WASTER *at left, throwing the paper streamers in every direction and stopping often to look back.*

WASTER. Hail, Cynic! (*Joins* CYNIC *and* SEEKER.) Who is your newest dupe, eh? (*He slaps the* SEEKER *jovially on the back.*)

CYNIC. A seeker who would taste life. (*He winks prodigiously at the* WASTER.)

WASTER. That is right. But Seeker, do not merely taste it; drink deep, drink deep! Spill it! (*Makes a gesture of pouring.*) Drain it! (*Laughs and scatters wide streamers.*) Eat, drink, and be merry, you know, for to-morrow you die!

SEEKER (*clutching the* WASTER *by the arm, and glancing fearfully back at* DESPAIR). Yes! But, how does one die?

CYNIC (*throwing back his head and laughing, pointing to the* SEEKER). Ho! Here we have a philosopher! Look at him, Waster.

WASTER (*beckoning and throwing streamers out left, laughing*). Ho, ho! Come here, Foolish Virgin. Here we have a philosopher, who asks, "How does one die?"

Enter the FOOLISH VIRGIN *at left with an unlighted lamp.*

FOOLISH VIRGIN. Ugh! Talk of something else.

SEEKER. But the Faith that I have lost taught my

fathers how to die. Alas! I no longer see her torch—her guiding light. (*Turns away sadly.*)

FOOLISH VIRGIN. I, too, have no light. See? The Wise Virgins would not give me one drop of oil for my lamp, and (*sadly*) when I knocked, I heard, "Too late! Too late!" (*She droops her head, and* DESPAIR, *followed by the two* SPIRITS OF DARKNESS, *noiselessly edges close to her.*)

A third SPIRIT OF DARKNESS *enters silently at left and joins* DESPAIR'S *group.*

(*After a moment's pause, the* FOOLISH VIRGIN *raises her head defiantly and smiles at the* WASTER.)

FOOLISH VIRGIN. Come, Waster. Let us dance and sing—and forget.

WASTER. Aye, that's the spirit!

(*The* WASTER *takes the* FOOLISH VIRGIN'S *hand, and they sing, as follows, to the tune of "Follow Me, Full of Glee."*)

FOOLISH VIRGIN (*singing*).
Life is brief
(*Both lift right hand and foot high.*)
WASTER (*singing*).
Like a leaf,
(*Both lift left hand and foot high.*)
BOTH.
Dancing on the maple tree.
(*Joining hands, they dance in place, first on one foot, then on the other.*)
FOOLISH VIRGIN.
One gay twirl,
(*Loosing hands, both whirl on toes.*)
WASTER.
Downward whirl,
BOTH.
One with earth the leaf shall be!

(*Bring arms high over heads, then slowly down, letting bodies droop.*)

WASTER.

Dance and sing and laugh and play,
(*Takes one side step to left.*)

FOOLISH VIRGIN.

Ere you're deep beneath the clay;
(*Takes one side step to right.*)

WASTER.

Life is brief
(*Both lift right hand and foot as before.*)

FOOLISH VIRGIN.

Like a leaf;
(*Both lift left hand and foot.*)
Cling while still you may.
(*Clasping hands high, both whirl once in place.*)

BOTH.

Laughing through the hours merrily, merrily,
(*They dance one step together toward left.*)
Shunning ugly care warily, warily,
Dance and sing,
(*Dance one step toward front.*)
Laugh and play,
(*Dance one step backward toward rear.*)
Live life while you may!
(*They whirl once, and end laughing.*)

CYNIC (*applauding*). How did you like that, Seeker? Like it? (*Takes the* SEEKER'S *arm.*)

SEEKER (*tragically, drawing away*). No, no, no! I find no joy here. I see only Despair. (*He shudders and thrusts hands up with repelling gesture.*)

Enter three more SPIRITS OF DARKNESS *from left, who group themselves closely behind* DESPAIR.

SEEKER (*throws his hands high, appealingly*). Ah, how shall I ever find sweet Hope here, when I have lost Faith, my guide, and Love, my sweet companion?

CYNIC. Don't be a fool.

The WISE MAN *appears up right and beckons to the* SEEKER.

WISE MAN. Come back into the path of your youth. There Despair cannot follow, and you shall find Faith once more. Seeker, come.

SEEKER (*turning joyfully to face the* WISE MAN, *and taking a step toward rear*). Thank you, Wise Man. I come.

CYNIC (*snatching* SEEKER'S *tunic and turning him about sharply*). Don't be a fool, I say.

WASTER. Don't go. Drink deep of life. Spill it, spill it! (*Throws streamers over the* SEEKER, *laughing.*)

FOOLISH VIRGIN (*seizing the* SEEKER'S *hand, beseechingly*). Don't leave me! Stay! It is dark here, and if I am alone, I shall have to ponder on how to die. Oh, stay!

SEEKER (*breaking away and stepping back, arm stretched out commandingly*). Away, selfish and false tempters! Away, black Despair, with your noisome brood! (*Turns back, and runs into the narrow path.*) I come, Wise Man. Give me back my Faith.

At left, the CYNIC, *the* WASTER, DESPAIR, *his six* SPIRITS OF DARKNESS, *and the* FOOLISH VIRGIN *shrink backward toward left entrance. Immediately,* FAITH *enters from right and comes into the narrow path.*

FAITH. Lo, I am with you again,
The Faith your fathers knew;

LOVE *enters from right and comes beside the* SEEKER.

LOVE. And Love will be your friend,
When Faith comes back to you.

SEEKER. My dear guide and companion, it is good to have you beside me again!

JOY *enters like a small whirlwind from right, arms high over her head, a-tiptoe, fringes flying like miniature rainbows; she runs into the narrow path.*

JOY. While Love and Faith, together,
Serenity are bringing,
Then Joy will dance before you,
And never cease her singing.

SEEKER. Lovely little Joy, you make me feel that Hope is very near. (*All in narrow path take two or three steps toward front. Suddenly the* SEEKER *points eagerly out right front.*) Ah, look, friends! What is that light?

FAITH (*pausing at center front, torch high, pointing toward right*). It is the light of the first radiant Easter dawn, when Faith triumphed over all her foes.

JOY (*spreading arms wide, with face alight*). It is the light of that happy Easter, when Joy came out of the dawn into a saddened world.

LOVE. It is the light of that first Resurrection morn, when Love undying conquered Death. (*Holds her arms out toward right.*)

The WISE MAN *enters at right and advances down the narrow path.*

WISE MAN. It is the light of that first Easter Day, when Hope eternal was born.

SEEKER (*starting toward right with outstretched hands*). Hope! Sweet Hope!

Enter HOPE, *down right, followed by* SIX SPIRITS OF LIGHT, *who make a close semicircle about her, down right.*

HOPE. I am Hope, eternal flower,
(*Extending lily in both hands out toward the* SEEKER.)
Born upon that wondrous hour,

When the God who, lowly, died,
Rose from death, all glorified!

(*She takes a step toward the* SEEKER, *whose hands are still out to her.*)

He who strives his days to bless
In the paths of righteousness,
He shall neither seek nor grope.

(*She steps into path beside* SEEKER *and holds lily high in her and his joined hands.*)

These shall guide:

(HOPE *smiles at* LOVE *and* FAITH, *and they come to either side of her, standing a little behind her, while the* SIX SPIRITS OF LIGHT *hold their lilies to form a wreath in front of* HOPE.)

HOPE. Faith, Love, and Hope!

(*The group at left shrink into upper left corner, huddled together. The* WISE MAN, *behind the others at center rear, raises his hands and eyes upward,* FAITH *raises her torch high, and* JOY, *laughing, skips down close to the front, as the curtain is drawn. If there is no curtain, all may form a procession and march off the stage to music.*)

THE CROSS AND THE CROWN

(*Recitation for a girl*)

SCENE: *A row of potted Easter lilies, or other flowers, whose pots are concealed by moss or covered with green paper, forms a barrier between the girl, who should be rather tall, and the audience. Behind the plants on a hidden chair are laid a cross and a wreath, each made of white flowers. The girl enters and faces the audience from behind the flowers.*

In a garden once, a child
Sadly strayed, while sunbeams mild
Turned her tangled yellow curls to shining floss;
And she dropped a childish tear
For her dying Savior dear,
While her tiny fingers shaped a flow'ry cross.
(*She picks up the cross.*)

Then with whispered pray'r, apart,
Springing from her childish heart,
Down she laid the lovely thing upon the sod;
(*She lays the cross on the chair, well hidden behind the plants.*)
And she looked up with a tear,
Whisp'ring softly, "Angel dear,
Will you please take up my little gift to God?"

(*The girl takes a few steps toward right front.*)

Then from dusky garden bow'rs,
Dim throughout the night's still hours,
Gentle footsteps of the little maid had fled;
But behold! An angel stirred
There within the paths, unheard,
Ere the waiting skies were flushed with dawning red.

Soon a lark's ecstatic hymn,
Close beside her casement dim,
Woke the sleeping child to say 'twas Easter dawn;
And with swift feet, unafraid,
Through the dew, the little maid
Sped adown the paths where angel feet had gone.

There within the lovely bow'rs,
She could find no cross of flow'rs,
But instead, where sunbeams poured their treasures down,

For her sweet and tender thought,
Angel hands had wondrous wrought,
As an Easter gift from God, a flow'ry crown!

(*She picks up the crown and holds it high.*)

THE BRIDGE OF GOLD

(*Exercise for eight girls*)

CHARACTERS

SPEAKER
CHORUS OF SEVEN GIRLS

COSTUMES.—The Speaker, who should be a tall girl, wears either a becoming modern dress in a light color, or a long white gown made in Grecian style. The girls of the chorus represent the seven colors of the rainbow, and each wears a long Grecian robe of a different color, and carries a scarf to match.

SCENE: *At the back of the stage are arranged five boxes, the highest one being in the middle and those on either side being graduated in height, so that the girls standing on them are in arch formation. In front of the boxes, which are concealed by blooming plants and greenery, hangs a drapery which may be parted in the middle. It completely hides them from the audience. There is an entrance up right, in front of the drapery.*

The SPEAKER *enters at right and stands down right.*

SPEAKER.

If life were all winter—still
Whiteness, changeless, bleak, and chill,
Save where stark trees on the hill

Black shadows trace,
Then love's warm river would congeal,
No hope the soul would ever feel,
And grim despair from life would steal
All joy and grace.

The draperies are parted, and the girls of the chorus dance in, one behind the other, from up right, whirling and dipping without any regular time, each differently, some holding scarfs like wings, some swinging them low, and others holding them high overhead. They go thus softly around and around the stage while the SPEAKER *recites the following stanza.*

SPEAKER.

But Spring weaves on her lovely loom,
And soon the white fields blush and bloom,
And lavish color scatters gloom;
And life is sweet!
All forgotten is despair;
Promise beckons everywhere,
In each waking flow'ret rare,
Low at our feet.

(*As the girls group up center, scarfs held high in both hands, the draperies are closed, shutting them from view.*)

SPEAKER (*coming nearer center front*).

So He whose blood our sins did lave,
He who died all men to save,
Though He has lain in wintry grave,
Will know His spring!
And to the stricken soldiers' eyes,
In radiant and godly guise,
The lowly Nazarene will rise,
A conq'ring King!

(*The draperies are opened, and the girls are seen, all kneeling in a semicircle, eyes upraised and hands clasped, scarfs over the hair, half veiling the eyes. They hold this pose during the following stanza.*)

SPEAKER (*stepping to right*).

Ah, though His anguish shake the soul
As midnight storms that thund'ring roll
From out the livid heavens' bowl,
Awesome and dark!
Ah, still, that Easter dawn, divine,
Bringing back His peace benign,
Like the rainbow's lovely sign,
Is Hope's bright arc!

(*The draperies close for a moment to allow the girls to form a rainbow at rear, being careful to place the colors in their right order. They hold their scarfs by the ends out wide, hands touching nearest hands so as to form an unbroken arch of color.*)

SPEAKER.

As a radiant rainbow beams,
As a bridge of gold that gleams,
So the Easter message seems,
In Christ's great love,
(*The draperies are opened to reveal the rainbow arch.*)
Like a bridge of gold aglow,
O'er which man may climb and go
From this vale of tears and woe
To heav'n above!

(*After brief tableau, the draperies are drawn, and the* SPEAKER *goes off at right.*)

TONY'S EASTER SUIT

(Recitation for a boy)

COSTUME.—Tony is small, but not necessarily young, and he is wearing a torn blouse and dark trousers, gay sash, and vivid, flowing tie. He carries a box containing a pair of bright new tan shoes, a hat bag for his new straw hat, a paper in which is wrapped a loud tie, another which holds the socks to match tie, a shirt of bright blue cotton, and a suit which consists of vest, coat, and two pairs of trousers, one pair short, the other long. A second boy, shabbily dressed and impish of expression, assists, but has no lines to speak.

SCENE: *In center of stage, there is a small table, with a chair at right of it.*

TONY *enters at right, carrying the box containing his costume.*

TONY (*bowing jauntily*).

How are you, folks, this fine-a day?
Don't-a you think Tony's-a gay?
(*Spreads out laden arms.*)
I had to pay da big-a price,
But on Easter, you gotta look-a nice.
(*Nods and strolls over to chair.*)

The little bird, they try-a their note,
So swe-eet, I feel-a da choke-a in my throat;
(*Hand to throat.*)
I see-a da flower like a pretty cup-a,
Then Tony, he have to doll-a up-a.
(*Laughs and takes shoes out of box, setting other things down upon chair.*)

Take a look at-a these, if they are great!
(*Holds shoes up.*)

Cost me two-a ninety-eight!
(*Wags head dolefully.*)
Nobody else-a on da street-a
Will have-a such-a pretty feet-a!

(*He now puts shoes in box, then, without turning around, reaches back of him to set the box upon the table behind him. He next busies himself with carefully pulling hat out of bag, and while he is doing this, the extra boy creeps in, on all fours, at right, snatches shoe box from table, and runs noiselessly out, winking at audience.* TONY *at last has hat out and holds it up, turning it round and round admiringly.*

And when-a you talk about a hat,
Just tell-a me what you think-a 'bout that!
(*Puts on hat and struts.*)
Da ladies think-a their Easter hat's fine—
(*Takes off hat and puts it in bag.*)
They got-a notting on-a mine.

Chuckles and sets his hat upon table, never turning to look behind him. While TONY *unwraps paper parcels containing tie and socks, with a serious, intent expression, the extra boy sidles in at right, tiptoeing with exaggerated caution, lifting feet very high, and slips bag from table with deft movement. Then, with bag behind his back, he backs out softly.* TONY *shows tie and socks to audience.*

My purple tie and socks-a match—
(*Puts them together.*)
Won't the girls-a think Tony's a catch?
(*Laughs and looks flirtatious. Picks up shirt and holds it up against him.*)
My Easter shirt-a is-a blue, you see,
Like-a the sunny skies of Italee.

He sighs, and lays tie, socks, and shirt upon table absently, wiping his eyes when his hands are free. The extra boy enters at right, and sitting upon floor and propelling himself with his hands, makes his noiseless way to table, slides under it, lifts parcels and shirt off from underneath, and works his way out at right in the same manner.

(TONY, *having recovered from his momentary sadness, takes the coat of suit in his hands lovingly.*)

I put-a some mon' in this-a suit!
(*Holds up ten fingers and thumbs.*)
But I ask-a you, folks, if it's a beaut'!
(*Beams.*)
No holler, "cheap-a!" 'Tis one of da best:
Two pants, a coat-a, and da vest.
(*He slides vest to table and shows coat.*)

When I put-a on this swell-a rig,
I feel-a like dance-a da jolly jig!
(*Jigs a few measures.*)
Nobody in da Easter crowd-a
Will have a coat that speak so loud-a.

(*Puts coat on table, then holds up both pairs of trousers.*)

One pants is beeg-a, and drop-a down low,
For when I play-a da golf, you know,
(*Winks and strikes imaginary ball.*)
And one is long-a and-a very straight,
For when I have-a da swell-a date.

(*Laughs aloud and places trousers on table, with coat and vest.*)

The boy appears at the right, in full view of the

audience, but unnoticed by TONY. *He has the new hat on his head, awry, the tie tied about the neck of the blue shirt, which, though much too large, has been tucked hastily into his torn trousers, while the new shoes adorn his feet, revealing one of the new socks, and a different one on the other foot. The boy wears an impish grin, and he produces a long-handled rake with which he proceeds to rake the clothing off the table, gradually pulling it toward his feet at right, while* TONY, *blissfully unaware of danger, complacently rubs his hands at center and goes on speaking.*

O-oh! On Easter Day-a, I feel-a so tickle',
(*All radiant with joy.*)
I wouldn't get-a mad, for a nickel!

(*Shakes head and hums happily as he turns, shoving the chair out of his way, to gather up his new things. Not a thing is left upon the table.* TONY *turns back to the audience his astonished, stricken face, which, for a moment, expresses no anger, but only perplexity and anxiety. He looks to left, taking a few steps. He looks under table, then as the boy, still struggling to corral his treasure, reaches his rake in a little too far,* TONY *sees him, becomes hysterical with rage, and shakes from head to foot, throwing both fists up and screaming as he runs out after the retreating boy.*)

Why—what-a! You-a! Come back! You Jack!
I'll pound you till-a you're blue-a and black!

(*The last of this is shouted from off right.*)

HAM AND EGGS

(Dialogue for two boys)

CHARACTERS

HAM, *everybody's favorite*
EGG, *his pal*

COSTUMES.—A fat boy wearing a striped pink and white suit and a baker's cap of white, plays the part of Ham. A smaller but equally plump boy is the Egg. He wears a one-piece white suit, appropriately padded through the middle, and topped by a tight-fitting white skull cap.

SCENE: *A restaurant on an Easter Sunday morning. There are three small tables with two chairs apiece, a table at right, another at left, and a third at center. The right hand chair at the center table is occupied by the portly* HAM.

Immediately EGG *enters at right with a rolling gait and approaches the table. He is jolly and entirely at ease.*

HAM (*sighing*). I declare, this is the only time of day that I can call my soul my own.

EGG (*laughing and shaking* HAM'S *chair as he goes to sit opposite him*). Your soul! Why, you haven't even a yolk! But whatever it is you have, you won't call it your own very long now, for this is Easter Sunday, and the crowds will soon fill this restaurant to the chandeliers.

HAM. Oh, I know it's Easter Sunday! (*Tilts his chair back comfortably, thumbs in place where vest should be and addresses* EGG *jovially.*) I'm surprised to see you so cheerful about it, old egg.

EGG (*looking about fearfully*). Sh! Will you?

Don't call me an old egg. Some one might hear you. I'm strictly fresh. (*Winks.*)

HAM. Ho, ho! Tell another one. (*Leans over to slap* EGG *on the arm.*)

EGG. And of course I'm cheerful! Why shouldn't I be? (*He slips from his chair and stands on his head near the table.*)

HAM (*rising to watch him*). What kind of an omelet are you trying to make of yourself?

EGG (*sitting calmly*). I'm showing you how to make an egg stand on end.

HAM (*turning away scornfully and walking to right*). Huh! You're a little cracked!

EGG. Sure. That's the way Columbus made his egg stand; remember? (*Laughs, shaking all over, and flopping his arms.*) Ha, ha! That's one on you, Ham!

HAM. Laugh! (*Wags a finger at* EGG.) Laugh! He laughs best who laughs last. I'll be laughing next year on Easter, but you (*leaning over* EGG, *prophesying*)—you'll never see another Easter Day!

EGG (*jumping up*). Hey? What? By my yolk, you gave me a start! (*Kicking chair from behind him.*) I almost fell. But you're joking, I see. (*Settles back into chair.*)

HAM. It's no joke for you, old Rhode Island Red. (*Chuckles.*) You ought to know that the egg is the most popular food for Easter. Everybody eats eggs on Easter—everybody! If all the eggs eaten on Easter Sunday were put into one omelet (*assumes professional barker's voice and attitude at right*), ladies and gentlemen, that omelet would make a raft big enough to float the *Leviathan*. Old egg, I'm sorry for you. (*Slaps* EGG *upon back and sits at right, turning his chair back toward front and straddling it, hugging the back.*)

EGG. You're the one who's in a pickle, Mr. Ham! (*He begins to get angry and rises and gives the remainder of his speech with growing speed and spirit, prancing about in front of the calm* HAM.) I heard

the chef say just yesterday that he hoped the ham would hold out, because there would be an awful demand for it on Easter Sunday, so there! Good-bye, Ham! (*Turns and goes to left.*)

HAM. You only thought the chef said, "ham." What he said was "lamb," my child—"lamb"—baa-baa lamb; see? (*Rocks chair back and forth.*) I'm perfectly safe, but your goose is cooked. (*Wags his hand dolefully at* EGG.)

EGG (*more and more heatedly*). Don't call me a goose! I'm not a goose; I'm a hen's egg. I wouldn't be a goose—silly thing! (*Shouts.*) And the chef did say, "ham," and I read in the paper that came around the crate that I came in that several tons of ham had come into the city for the Easter trade, and (*almost breathless from talking so fast, he puffs out one good breath, glaring at* HAM, *then goes on, as fast as before, still prancing around in front of* HAM) that ham would be on every table on Easter Sunday. So there! (*Sits, exhausted, but triumphant.*)

HAM. Keep cool, keep cool, old egg. If you get overheated, you'll be hard-boiled in no time, and I think the patrons will prefer you fried for Easter. (*He grins tantalizingly, and dodges suddenly, as* EGG *pretends to pick up a chair to hit him.*) What do I hear? (*Puts a hand to his ear.*) "Fried eggs, two, please." Then flop! (*Flops his hand over.*) You'll be sizzling in the pan. Whew! (*Mops his brow with one hand.*) Hot!

EGG. Not half so hot as you'll be in the oven, all smeared with sticky brown sugar and (*leaning forward and illustrating with wicked glee*) stabbed in a dozen places with sharp cloves. Whee! You'll roast! Serves you right, you smoky, fat, old Ham! (*Snaps his fingers derisively.*)

HAM (*aroused to anger for the first time, and sitting up straight*). Stop! You're nothing but a soft-shelled old egg! (*Leaning forward threateningly.*) I could

crack you neatly! (*He half rises and adds sharply.*) Cr-rrack!

EGG (*assuming same pose across table*). Hey? Hey? I could slice you just as neatly! Zip! (*Makes a motion of cutting.*)

HAM (*jumping up and swinging table out of his way swiftly, to face* EGG). You would, would you? I'll scramble you into an omelet! (*Clutches* EGG.)

EGG (*somewhat breathless, but game*). You shan't! I'll flatten you into a ham sandwich! (*Draws his hand back as if to strike.*)

HAM (*holding* EGG's *arms*). Huh! Huh!

(*They are about to wrestle when from off stage a stentorian voice calls.*)

VOICE (*off left*). Ham and eggs!

(HAM *and* EGG *move apart, aghast, staring off left and then at each other.*)

HAM. Wh—what was that?

VOICE (*off left, repeating in monotonous tone*). Ham and eggs. Twenty orders!

HAM (*at* EGG'S *ear*). Hear that, Egg?

EGG (*clutching* HAM *fearfully and backing away from table, eyes on place at left from which voice issues*). Uh-huh! (*Meaning "yes."*)

HAM. By my hambone, we've got to get away from here, quick!

EGG. By my yolk, I'll say we have! You were right. (*Taking* HAM'S *arm.*)

HAM. So were you; so were you. (*They keep backing toward right, looking off left.*) You're a good egg.

EGG. You're a well-cured ham. Forget my hasty words.

HAM. It's all right; I was a little hot, myself. Shake! (*They shake hands solemnly at right.*)

VOICE (*intoning, off left*). Ham and eggs, twenty-five orders.

HAM. Hot mustard! We'd better disappear! (*Drags* EGG *toward right door.*)

EGG. This way out! By my yolk, I wish it was Christmas, not Easter!

(*Exeunt* HAM *and* EGG *at right, running.*)

THE EASTER BUNNY'S WOES

(*Monologue for a small boy*)

COSTUME.—The boy who represents the Bunny wears a pink one-piece suit. One leg and one sleeve are basted lightly on so that they will come off readily. One of his long upstanding ears is also lightly attached, as is the top portion of the other ear; his bit of a fluffy pink yarn tail is caught by a thread; he wears at first a pink mask, painted with a beatific bunny smile, and under this mask his face is powdered white.

SCENE: *There is a long, narrow board or counter near front of stage. It is low enough to allow the* BUNNY *to hop off and on easily. Several candy roosters, chickens, bunnies, chocolate eggs, and the like are set on the counter, as if for sale.* BUNNY *sits on right end of the board, very near the right entrance, next to a large candy rooster. A boy, larger than* BUNNY, *stands off stage near the right entrance, so that he can reach the* BUNNY *and pull him off the board, without showing himself entirely.*

If there is no curtain, BUNNY *may hop in at left, cross to the right end of the counter and jump up on it. He sits there facing the audience wearily for a moment, then turns to the rooster beside him.*

BUNNY. Hey, Cock! (*He pokes the rooster.*) Isn't this a poky place? (*Yawns widely.*) Nothing doing at

all. Nothing. (*Looks from side to side and stretches arms wide.*) A good-looking bunny like myself ought to be out in the woods at this time of year. (*Pokes the rooster again and jumps off the counter.*) Hey, are you listening? Have you ever seen the woods at this time, Easter time, eh? (*He sways and humps himself up and down in delight, smiling.*)

Oh, hippity-hippity-hip! Hoppity-hoppity-hop! It's fun down in the woods at Easter time! The snow is all gone, except in little hollows that look like little round bowls of ice cream. (*Stops suddenly and grimaces.*) Huh! Why did I mention that? It makes me hungry, and (*he hops along front, low*) not a carrot in sight! (*Sighs and leans against board, near the rooster.*)

But the woods are great! Little, fat buds on the trees (*looks up and laughs*) and little violets so high! (*Stoops very low, measuring an inch from the floor, then hops gleefully across front to left.*) Whee! A good-looking bunny like me is wasted here in this poky place—a pink marshmallow one, especially! (*Struts.*) I should be living in the woods, right near somebody's garden or hotbeds, where crisp little lettuces might be peeping up just now! (*Winks at audience.*)

Everything is beginning to wake up now at Easter time, out of doors. But here (*he sniffs scornfully, looks bored, shrugs his shoulders, and climbs upon very end of board, at right*)—here, nothing ever happens for excitement!

(*The boy outside reaches in an arm and pulls* BUNNY *from the counter.* BUNNY *looks surprised, then screams.*) Ow! Ow! Ow! Help! Cock!

Exit BUNNY, *pulled out by the boy, but still screaming, "Help," and, as quickly as the loose portion of ear can be pulled off,* BUNNY *runs on again, clutching his broken ear and runs to the rooster.*

Cock, look! See what that young imp did to my ear!

He bit off a piece—the rascal, the scamp! Oh, dear! Does it spoil my looks, Cock? (*Sits disconsolately on counter and turns to Cock.*) I wouldn't have had it happen for the world. My handsome ear! (*He feels the other long ear and brightens a little.*) Well, it might have been worse. Everybody looks at my beautiful complexion, so they may not notice my ears.

Ugh! This horrid place! Don't you wish some beautiful young lady would buy us and keep us for ornaments? I'd hate to be given to some dirty boy, and have my lovely pink complexion all smeared. I hate dirty— (*The boy reaches out a hand to* BUNNY'S *shoulder and pulls.*) Oh! (BUNNY, *tumbling and struggling, is pulled off stage. This time, the pink mask is quickly removed.*)

BUNNY *enters, both hands to his face, wailing.*

Cock! Tell me, quick! How does my poor face look? He licked my beautiful complexion! Oh, oh! The horrid, greedy little thing! (*Goes with slow hops to the left.*) I'd like to get out of this awful place before my beauty is spoiled entirely! Mercy! A bunny that minds his own business isn't safe in this tough place! My tastes were formed by genteel people. (*Draws himself up and hops disconsolately over to right end of board, with a fearful glance out, nudging over close to Cock.*)

Say, Cock— Hey! Get off my tail, will you? (*Edges back nearer right end.*) What? Is it curtailed? Why, you're offensive! It's a bunny's tail, and a fluffy, silky one, too. I'm proud of my tail, I am! (*The boy reaches in and seizes* BUNNY'S *arm.*) Ouch! Don't! He's here again! (*He is dragged off right and calls from off stage, where the boy removes his tail.*) Help!

BUNNY *backs in, shaking his fists toward off right.*

It's my tail this time, Cock—my tail! (*Sits on board*

and turns to look back at the tail he no longer has, then turns back and pushes Cock.) Cock, does my tail show badly when I sit on my tail where it is gone? (*Heaves loud sigh.*) That boy is a cannibal! What did you say? (*Puts a hand behind his good ear and bends toward Cock.*) I don't hear very well out of my broken ear. It's a mercy I have one whole ear left.

(*The boy jerks* BUNNY *quickly off the counter and off stage while* BUNNY *shouts.*) Here, let me alone! Let me alone, I say!

The boy takes off the whole ear and BUNNY *stumbles in at right against counter, shaking his head dolefully as he feels all over it with both hands.*

He bit off my other ear; it's all gone! (*Turns in a rage and hops up and down, looking out right.*) I'd like to bite off his ears! (*He turns to the Cock.*) A handsome bunny like me to be treated like that! (*He turns toward right again, his rage increasing as he shouts more loudly.*) I'd like to bite off his head! (*He hops painfully to board and climbs up with an effort, still rubbing his head.*)

I know I'm a fright. Say, Cock, am I a fright? (*Smoothes his suit.*) At least, my paws are all there. Maybe I can run away— (*He brightens and jumps down.*) Ee-ee! (*Squeaks.*)

(*The boy reaches in and pulls* BUNNY *off by the arm.* BUNNY *squeals, off stage.*) Ee-ee-ee! (*The boy rips off the loose sleeve, and* BUNNY *quickly slides his arm down inside his suit so that to all appearances his paw is gone.*)

BUNNY *comes in and hops a few steps toward the board.*

Cock, he did it! (*Looks sad and discouraged.*) My front paw—but maybe I could still hop away—maybe (*looks all about in a panic*), if that horrid, terrible,

miserable little cannibal— Ow! (*The boy grasps* BUNNY *by the middle and drags him off. Off stage, the boy removes the loose leg of* BUNNY'S *suit.*)

BUNNY *reappears at right, leaning against the wing so that only his good leg shows, the other being doubled up out of sight of the audience. As he speaks, his voice is weak.*

And now, Cock, I've only one leg—only one. See! (*Supporting himself by holding to the wing, he kicks out with the good leg.*) But then (*his tone and attitude change suddenly, his face brightens, and he laughs*), I don't care! That's what a pink marshmallow bunny is made for—for little boys to eat! Ha, ha! G'bye, Cock! (*Waves his one paw.*) Happy Easter!

(BUNNY *disappears with what is left of himself, at right.*)

THE DANCE OF THE EASTER SUNBEAMS

(*Exercise for eight girls*)

CHARACTERS

SPEAKER
CHORUS OF SEVEN GIRLS

COSTUMES.—The girl who recites is dressed in white. The girls of the chorus wear long, classic gowns of yellow, with long enveloping veils of black netting or chiffon coming well up over their heads, for their first two appearances.

SCENE: *A garden. Simple green draperies with blossoming boughs fastened here and there form a back drop, and a low, blossom-laden branch juts into the*

scene at the right front wing. Flowers in pots at the back and sides of the stage may be added, if the pots are concealed by moss or ferns.

The SPEAKER *enters at right and stands near the branch of blossoms.*

SPEAKER.

I stood in my garden, when springtime was new,
And a bold, early crocus oped one yellow eye,
And I breathed in the sweetness of violets shy:
Bits of fringes that fell from the sky's robe of blue.
And from out the Good Book my heart loved and knew,
Bitter mem'ries came flooding of scourge and of thorn,
And memories sweet of a glad Easter morn,
When, in a springtime of old, rose a crucified Jew.

And the sunbeams that trod o'er my garden's green floor
Of a sudden, in fancy, enacted again
The drama divine of atonement and pain,
The tale of a king all lowly and poor;
Of a sudden, like shapes from a beautiful shore,
In shimmering robes of gauziest gold,
Dim-glimpsed where a mantle of black did unfold,
They chanted a dirge for the God we adore!

Softly, the music of "America the Beautiful" begins, and the girls of the chorus, veiled in black, step noiselessly in from up right with heads low and faces half averted. They glide across to form line along the rear, then halt and sing.

CHORUS (*singing*).

Oh, bitter day! Oh, day of woe!
That saw our Savior die!
When sunbeams veil their golden face
Behind a mourning sky!

Oh, sunbeams bright! Oh, fleecy clouds!
In deepest grief abide,
For lo, the God who fashioned thee
Is dying, crucified!

As the music of the song is repeated, the girls of the chorus glide down left side of stage and across to center front, where they turn and start toward the center rear. There the leader turns and marches diagonally to a point halfway between the center of the stage and the center of the right side, facing right. The second girl marches to a similar point at left, facing left. The third girl halts at the center rear, and the remaining four halt in a straight line through the center, facing the rear. Thus the seven girls form a cross. When the last girl is in place, all turn to face front. They hold this position for a measure or two, then the girl who forms the right arm of the cross glides diagonally down to center front, followed by the two girls nearest center rear. At the same time, the girl forming the left arm of the cross glides diagonally to center rear, followed by the two girls nearest the audience. This leaves the girls at center as a pivot around which the others turn in the march. When the leader reaches center rear, she turns left and marches out at upper left corner, followed by all the others, the girl at center being the last in line. As the music stops, the Speaker recites.

SPEAKER.

Ah, in storms of despair did my poor spirit toss,
And hushed in each nest was the birdling so wee,
As, low o'er the grasses, my eyes seemed to see
The sinister shadow of Golgotha's cross.
The gold of the sun seemed all changed into dross,
The world, in awed silence, stilled quivering breath
To worship its Savior, held captive in death,
While black-veiléd sunbeams were mourning their loss!

(*While the music of "America the Beautiful" begins again, the girls of the chorus glide softly in to form a line across the back. They stand closely grouped, the middle girl hiding her face in both hands, the girls nearest her on each side leaning upon her shoulders, their faces sad. The two girls on each end stretch their right hands beseechingly out toward their respective sides, their bodies drooping, with their free hands on their hearts. They hold these poses while the* SPEAKER *alone sings the following to the air of "America the Beautiful."*

SPEAKER (*singing*).

Alas, alas, for bitter hours,
For awful time of doom!
When low He lies beneath the stone,
Within the silent tomb!
Alas, alas! How can the sun
Smile on the world again,
When man's ungrateful hand in hate
His Savior God has slain?

(*The girls of the chorus glide softly out at right.*)

(*The* SPEAKER *recites again, coming a few steps nearer front, her face joyful.*)

SPEAKER.

But rapture unbounded doth follow despair,
For Death cannot humble the Giver of Life,
Nor sin conquer virtue, nor peace yield to strife,
While a risen Christ walks in Galilee fair!
Rejoicing, triumphant, in my garden there,
As upward I lifted my prayerful glance,
I saw the gold sunbeams in ecstasy dance,
As though in our glad exultation to share!

As the music is repeated, faster and more loudly, the girls of the chorus dance on, up right, whirling and

spreading their arms wide, having cast off the black veils. The SPEAKER *comes to center front, and they dance in spirals round and round her, as all sing to the same air as before.*

ALL (*singing*).

Rejoice and praise this Easter dawn,
Glad alleluias sing,
For lo, the tomb is opened wide,
And risen is our King!
The golden beams that touched him then
In glad, adoring way,
Still dance for joy when dawn proclaims
Each happy Easter Day.

THE LITTLE EASTER LILY

(*Recitation for a tiny girl*)

It's really not a hard lesson
(*Shakes her head smilingly.*)
To look on the bright side of things;
A little white daisy's a teacher;
You learn from each brooklet that sings.

When grown-ups are anxious or fretful,
(*Frowning.*)
Or gloomy and frowning and sad,
I know lovely things I can whisper
(*Finger up, smiling.*)
To make them all smile and be glad.
(*Nods wisely.*)

The longest and darkest December,
That drags itself drearily by,
(*Sighs and droops.*)

Will soon be a dream that's forgotten
Beneath April's laughing blue sky.
(*Throws arms wide open and dances a few steps.*)

Through the door of the heart of God's children
Joy only should enter within;
And after the winter, the robin
Comes tuning his wee violin.
(*Bends head in listening attitude.*)

Would you know why I'm ever so happy,
(*Coming nearer front.*)
When I am at work or at play?
(*Pauses and nods to all sides brightly.*)
It's because I am God's Easter lily,
And born on a glad Easter Day.
(*Bows and dances out.*)

THE PROCESSION OF THE EASTER PILGRIMS

(*Drill for twelve older boys and six older girls*)

COSTUMES.—The boys, who are the pilgrims, wear belted robes of dull brown, loose and long, with flowing sleeves, their heads covered with turbans of the same color, and their feet shod in sandals. The girls' robes are also full and long. One is of pale blue, bordered along the edges of the front and at the hem with darker blue; another is of gray, banded with violet; a third is of deep yellow, trimmed with black; a fourth is of tan, bordered in dark brown; a fifth, of rose color, banded in soft green; and the last is of green, trimmed with silver. All the girls wear as a veil over the hair a long rectangle of cloth matching the gown, also sandals on their feet. Each pilgrim carries a rough staff.

Green matting covers the stage floor. Draperies of sky-blue, with puffs of white looped along top, enclose the sides and back of stage. Across the upper right corner is a low rock, made of gray building paper, surmounted by a glittering star of tinsel and gold, just above an opening in the front of the rock which simulates an entrance. At upper left corner is another rock of similar construction, without the opening, surmounted by a slender cross. At center back, a rock, much higher and narrower than these two, has above it a crown of gilt, shaped like a sun with its rays. A light may be focused upon this crown from off stage, or the circlet may be covered with the gleaming powder which is sold for trimming Christmas trees. There are four entrances: up right, up left, down right, and down left respectively.

Any good march may be used for this drill.

Three girls enter, down right, walking abreast with hands joined low. At the same time, three other girls enter, down left, in the same manner. Starting with the outside foot, they take a long step forward on the toes followed by a short step, also on the toes. They swing their arms gayly.

They repeat this step, then pause, lift the outside foot and point it daintily forward, and swinging arms high, hold the pose for four counts. Then, repeating the two alternating long and short steps, and pausing once more, they point the opposite foot, swinging arms high, and hold the pose for four counts.

They are thus dancing to meet face to face near the center. With four short, tripping steps on the toes, the two groups come together near the center front, swinging their arms high so that each girl touches fingertips with the girl opposite her, at the meeting.

All pose thus, smiling, with heads thrown back, for three counts. On the fourth count, all whirl swiftly and

pause, facing the back of the stage, with arms dropped to sides.

Spreading their arms out wide, they dance up to the center rear, using the same alternating long and short step on the toes as at their entrance, every fourth step being followed by a pause and an upward swing of the arms, while first the outside foot is raised and pointed, then, on the next pause, the inside foot. At every pause the pose is held for four counts.

At the center rear, the lines separate, cross the rear, turn down the right and left sides respectively, and dance along the front until they meet to form a single straight line. The two girls at the center are already facing each other, and the couple on the left also face each other, while the couple on the right do the same. All swing their arms high and touch finger tips with their partners.

Turning quickly front, arms still upraised, and with finger tips touching those of the girl on either side, the six girls take four short, tripping steps down front, then, leaning forward smilingly toward the audience, they sway from side to side for three counts. On the fourth count, all the girls bow low, swinging their arms down and backward, finger tips still touching.

The three girls at right now face right, and the three at left face left. All girls place the hand nearest the audience at the back of the head, leaning the head lightly back against it, and place the inside hand on the hip.

The leaders start the dance up stage along the right and left sides respectively, using the following step: Point forward with the foot farthest from the audience, draw the foot back to position, then take a step forward on the same foot, and draw the other one up beside it; repeat with the foot nearest the audience, turning the head and body gracefully in the direction of the pointed foot.

After the pointing and stepping has been done once

with each foot, all take four short tripping steps, with heads bent slightly forward. Thus alternating the pointing and stepping with the four tripping steps, they dance around to the center rear, where the two lines meet.

Here the girls raise arms and touch finger tips with partners as before, first in pairs, then in a single line, as all turn to face the front. They trip four short steps toward the front, then pause, and all lean forward, smiling and swaying from side to side during three counts.

On the fourth count, they bow as before, swinging the arms downward and backward with finger tips touching. As they straighten up after the bow, all turn quickly to face the center of the stage.

The girl nearest center on the left side of the stage now dances diagonally down to the lower right corner, using the pointing and tripping steps, while the girl nearest the center on the right side dances down to the lower left corner. The second girl on the left now dances down to a point halfway between the lower right corner and the center rear, and at the same time, the second girl on the right dances to a similar point between the lower left corner and the center rear.

The two girls left near the center rear, touching finger tips high, whirl once around, then change places with each other. Thus a *V* has been formed, with its point at the center rear.

When all the girls are in their places in the *V* formations, they swing their arms high and sway from side to side for three counts, as before, bowing low with a downward and backward sweep of the arms on the fourth count.

Now using the same step, the two girls at the center rear, touching inner hands high, dance down to the center front. Simultaneously, the two girls at the lower right and left corners, respectively, turn and dance diagonally toward the opposite upper corners, passing each other at the center of the stage.

In order that the four girls may all reach their destination at the same time, the first two girls should keep their steps rather short, while the second pair should take fairly long steps. In the meantime, the two girls at the center front dance about in a small circle until all are in place.

A second *V* is now formed, with the apex at the center front. As soon as all are in place, they face front and repeat the bow with the swinging of the arms down and backward.

Each girl places both hands lightly on her hips. The two girls at the upper right and left corners, respectively, dance toward each other, using the following step: Still facing front, they slide the inside foot straight out at the side, draw it back, then slide again, and bring the other foot up to it, then take four short slides toward the center rear.

They repeat this step until they come to a point about two thirds of the way toward the center rear. The other four girls, in the meantime, sway from side to side in time to the music.

Next, the two girls nearest the center front dance away from each other, using the same step as the first couple, halting when about a third of the distance from their respective sides of the stage.

The girls not dancing continue to sway gently, with hands on hips. The two girls, who were in the center of the two lines of three, now dance toward each other with the same sliding step, pass at the center, and change places, going only far enough, however, to bring them directly behind the girls at the front. The girls are now in two straight vertical lines of three each, one line on either side of the stage. As soon as the last two girls are in line, all repeat the bowing and swinging of arms.

Both lines turn to face the center and dance toward each other until partners meet. All face the rear, and

with partners touching inside hands high, dance up toward the center rear.

Here the first couple turn to the right, the second couple to the left, and the last couple remain at the center rear. All six form a semicircle at the back of the stage, repeat the bow and downward swinging of the arms, then stand quietly in place.

The music is played more slowly. Six boys, representing the pilgrims, enter slowly, up right, three abreast. At the same time, the other six enter in the same manner up left.

As they walk, their eyes are turned upward, they hold the hand nearest the audience over the heart, and carry the pilgrim staff in the other hand. Their expression should be one of wonder and awe.

They march silently to the center rear, where the first three from each side meet, turn, and come down to center front six abreast, followed by the others in the same manner.

At the front, the first line of six bends to form a semicircle, and the second line forms another semicircle directly behind it.

Each pilgrim in the front semicircle turns slightly and lays his right hand upon the left shoulder of the pilgrim directly behind him, pointing upward with the staff in the other hand. This pose is held during four counts.

All now take four short steps nearer the front, their eyes still looking upward. Suddenly the pilgrims in the front line lower their staffs to strike the floor simultaneously. Those in the back line point upward with the free hand, raising the staff slightly in the other hand. This pose is held for four counts.

As the music becomes faster and more joyous, the girls at the back take four steps down front. The faces of the pilgrims brighten, as they all face the left in couples, and the partners link inside arms, the staffs being held in the outside hands.

They march to the lower left corner, and up the left side, letting the staffs tap the floor lightly in unison at each step. Turning, they cross the rear, passing behind the semicircle of girls. When all are in a straight line across the rear, they face the front.

The line bends to form a large semicircle behind the girls, and opens out in such a way that each girl is standing in front of the space between two pilgrims. All the girls turn their heads toward the center and look over one shoulder at the pilgrims behind them.

At the same time, the pilgrims with their free hands point upward to a spot directly above the center of the stage. Their faces express joy.

They step down into line with the girls, and each pair of pilgrims takes by the hand the girl standing between them. All face the left.

The music quickens a little, and all march in threes down the left side of the stage, then turn and march to the center front, where they make a sharp turn and march diagonally up the center to the rock surmounted by the star symbol at the upper right corner.

When the leaders have reached the star symbol, all on the stage raise their hands high in an expression of joy. This position is held for four counts. Then the hands are lowered, and the girls march up to the rock between the two lines of pilgrims.

The first girl takes a step which brings her in front of the star symbol and a little to the left of the opening in the rock. The second girl goes to the right side of the opening, the third to the left, beside the first girl, and so on in alternate order until all the girls are in a semicircle in front of the star.

The leaders of the two lines of pilgrims separate, the leader of the right line moving diagonally up to the right side of the rock, and the leader of the left line moving toward the left side of the rock. The two lines follow their leaders in such a way that they form a *V*,

with its apex pointing toward the center front, behind the semicircle of girls.

The girls, bending forward slightly, hold out both arms to the star. The pilgrims, stooping as though to peer into the opening in the rock, throw their left hands backward in a gesture of surprise.

All hold these positions for four counts. Then, all together, the pilgrims and girls drop to the right knee and bend their heads low in an attitude of worship. This pose is also held for four counts.

At a chord from the piano, all rise together. The pilgrim who is farthest up stage on the left side of the rock, leads the march across rear of stage. He is followed by the first girl at the left end of the semicircle, then by two pilgrims, another girl, two more pilgrims, and so on until all are marching in a long, single line.

The girls march with their hands clasped at the breast. The pilgrims clutch their robes at the waist with the left hand and carry the staffs in the right. The line of marchers turn down the left side of the stage, and across front, halting when all are in a line at front, closely grouped and facing the audience.

The music becomes slower, and all assume expressions of horror, and shrinking back, hold the hands, palms out, against the shoulders. They hold this pose for four counts.

Stepping backward, with hands still held against the shoulders, and averting the head toward the right, as though recoiling from a terrible scene, the pilgrim at the right end of the line moves slowly up the right side of the stage, followed by all the others, stepping backward in the same manner, expressions of protest and horror on their faces.

When the leader has reached the upper right corner, he faces front and marches slowly in a diagonal line down to center front.

When the line, closely grouped, stretches from up right to the center front, all the pilgrims lower their

staffs to touch the floor with a light tap, at the same time bowing their heads. The girls thrust out their hands, low at the sides, palms out, in a gesture of despair. All remain in this position during four counts.

The girls remain in place while the pilgrims step out to the side and either backward or forward as need be, to resume the grouping of three, with one girl between two pilgrims. The first line of three turns to face the rear, and marches slowly, in a diagonal line, to the rock bearing the symbol of the cross, at the upper left corner.

The others follow, the girls marching, as before, with hands clasped at breast, and the pilgrims holding their robes with the left hand and tapping at each step with the staff in the right hand.

Repeating their movements when facing the symbol of the star, the girls pass between the two lines of pilgrims, and the first girl takes her place directly in front of the cross. The second girl goes up stage to the right side of the rock, the third girl to the left end of the rock, and so on, until the girls have formed a *V* in front of the rock.

The girl forming the apex of the *V* in front of the cross, should be careful to stand far enough away from the rock so that the angle of the *V* is sharp and the lines are straight.

The two lines of pilgrims separate as before, the leaders moving toward the right and left sides of the rock respectively, the others following in a curve formation until the two lines have merged into one semicircle behind the *V* formed by the girls. The girls extend both arms toward the cross, stretching the body upward.

The pilgrims hold their left hands before their eyes, while their right hands hold staffs pressed against right shoulders, and heads are turned away toward the front. All hold this pose for four counts.

Then, all together, the girls and the pilgrims drop

down on left knee, and bow their heads upon their folded arms in an attitude of deep grief. They hold this position during four counts.

Suddenly the music becomes louder and more spirited. All rise together, dropping their hands to their sides. The pilgrim at the end of the line nearest the center rear leads the march across the rear, the others falling in behind him as before: one girl, then two pilgrims, and so on.

The pilgrims tap with their staffs in the right hand as before and hold the left hand up, palm out, in a gesture of waiting. The girls hold both hands slightly extended at waist level, with palms turned toward each other and fingers outspread in a gesture of joyful expectation.

All eyes are uplifted, and the faces of all have assumed expressions of hope. They march across the rear of the stage to the upper right corner, then turn and march diagonally to the center front.

When the leader has reached the center front, and the others are in a straight line behind him stretching toward the upper right corner, all halt and look toward the symbol of the crown at the center rear. Suddenly they throw both hands high up over their heads, at the same time assuming expressions of exultation and joy. They hold this pose for four counts.

The pilgrims lower the right hand, which holds the staff, and hold the left above the head in a triumphant gesture; the girls fold their hands on the breast. The girls remain in place while the pilgrims move, as before, to resume the grouping of three with one girl between two pilgrims.

Turning to face the rear, the six lines of three march up stage to quickened music, each three abreast, until the first group is directly in front of the crown, where they remain while the second group passes to the right of them, and the third group to the left of them.

There is thus a straight line of nine in front of the

crown. The next group of three pause directly behind the first group, the next group move to the left, and the last group move to the right, forming a second line of nine.

The girls raise their arms high toward the crown, stretching up eagerly on the toes of the right foot. The pilgrims raise their staffs high in the right hand, and stretch the left hand straight and high above the head. All hold this pose for four counts.

All turn to face front, keeping faces turned toward the crown. They should be spaced far enough apart to allow the audience to see each individual. The girls move forward two steps, while the pilgrims take two steps toward their respective sides, those on the right of the crown stepping to the right, and those on the left of the crown stepping to the left.

Each group of three girls form a *V*, with its apex down stage, the *V* farthest up stage being slightly smaller than the other. Facing the center, the girls kneel on the knee nearest the audience, look up sidewise at the crown, and hold out their folded hands to it, their faces radiant.

In the meantime, the pilgrims have formed two diagonal lines beginning near the crown and stretching in the direction of the lower right and left corners, respectively. Facing toward the crown, the pilgrims stretch both arms up to it, with staffs held high in both hands. All hold these positions for four counts.

As the music ends, all swing both arms downward and bow heads low in adoration, as the curtain is drawn. If there is no curtain, they may rise and march off the stage in two diagonal lines, by the right and left entrances, respectively, the girls placing themselves, as before, so that two pilgrims are between every two girls.

EASTER BELLS

(Exercise for five girls)

CHARACTERS

SPEAKER
FOUR EASTER BELLES

COSTUMES.—The speaker may wear a fluffy white dress, with slippers and stockings to match, and no hat. In contrast to her, the four Easter belles may wear gayly colored dresses with bouffant skirts, as elaborate as may be desired, with dainty, flower-trimmed hats. Each belle carries a tiny, tinkling bell suspended on a ribbon.

The SPEAKER *enters alone and comes down to center front.*

SPEAKER.

The bells are gay on Easter morn;
They tell with cheerful voice
Of springtime's happiness, new-born,
That bids us all rejoice.

Adown the street, the belles are seen,
(Looks off right.)
A-swinging to and fro;
Their tongues shall never cease till all
The Easter joy shall know.

There are tiny belles and friendly belles
And belles quite tall and proud;
And belles whose tones are low and sweet,
And belles with voices loud.

Though they be simple little belles,
In modest brown array,

Or richly decked with bits of gold,
They gladden Easter Day.
(*She backs to right corner, smiling mischievously.*)

There are Easter bells and Easter belles,
As you shall find is true;
(*Nods and then beckons off at right.*)

The FOUR EASTER BELLES *enter at right, tinkling their bells, and run across the stage, grouping closely at left, laughing and bowing, as the* SPEAKER, *at center front, finishes.*

But all the bells ring out in tune:
(*The four girls tinkle their bells.*)
"All Easter joy to you!"

(*The* FOUR EASTER BELLES *skip along the front of the stage, where they make a straight line behind the speaker, facing the audience. At a chord from the piano, all sing the following stanza to the tune of "Lightly Row."*)

ALL (*singing.*)

Easter belles! Easter belles!
All togged out to meet the swells!
Gowns high grade, Paris-made,
For the big parade.
See us marching down the street,
Just to give you folks a treat!
Easter belles! Easter belles!
Oh, such stylish gels!

(*While the pianist repeats the music once, the girls skip around the stage in single file, the speaker leading, each girl with her right hand on the shoulder of the girl in front. Then all skip off right in this formation, smiling back at the audience as they go.*)

EASTER PROBLEMS

(Exercise for four boys and three girls)

COSTUMES.—The speaker should be a tall, thin boy, stooped, having his hair powdered to look quite gray. The tallest of the children, a boy, should have a shabby blouse and torn trousers. The second, a girl, somewhat shorter, should wear a coat with only one sleeve. The third, in descending height, a boy, should wear a wide straw hat without any crown and overalls held up by one strap. The fourth, a girl, should wear a cotton dress, badly faded and torn. The fifth, a boy, should wear an overcoat from which a section is torn, and which is pinned across front with huge safety pins. The sixth, a small girl, should wear a gingham apron, and a straw hat whose brim is raveled and hanging along her cheek, as she chews shyly on one finger. The seventh, a tiny boy in rompers, has one good shoe and one flopping enormous slipper, with which he kicks delightedly in every direction.

The speaker enters alone, very wearily, with one hand on his back as if it ached.

SPEAKER (*solemnly*).

I say in all sobriety,
A father in society
Has very grave anxiety
On Easter Day;
If he meets each obligation
That goes with lofty station,
Then he suffers palpitation!
(*Holds his sides.*)
That's what I say!

Business care and sudden flurry,
And the rest of life's grim worry

Make a man just slave and hurry
The whole long year;
Though things always boil and bubble,
And there's always toil and trouble,
Yet my cares seem to redouble
When Easter's here.

Like charity, the winter's snow
It covers many sins, you know,
But in the spring, how bad spots show
Against green trees!
(*Sighs and looks gloomy.*)
The problems that most harass me
At Easter time, are sev'n, you see,
And they're no trifles, you'll agree!

He steps to left and the seven children, tallest first, march in at right, first stopping near right corner, grinning, next coming near him, and so on, so that the toddler, very tiny, will be nearest the speaker at left, as he speaks solemnly, pointing to the line.

Just look at these!

(*After a pause, he may lead them off wearily, or the curtain may fall.*)

SIM-NEL CAKES FOR EASTER

(*Dialogue for a boy and a girl*)

CHARACTERS

SIMON, *a baker*
NELLY, *his wife*

COSTUMES.—Both children wear bakers' white caps and aprons, and both should be made up to look fat and jolly. Their arms should be white with flour.

SCENE: *The stage should be set as a kitchen, with a door at right and another at left. A kitchen table stands down center. On it are mixing bowls, spoons, cups, bags of sugar, flour, and the like. If desired, a kitchen chair or two may be placed at left and right respectively, but they are not necessary.*

At rise of curtain, NELLY *stands back of the table with her sleeves rolled up and her arms floury, mixing something in one of the bowls with great gusto, nodding to herself and smiling mysteriously. She presently sets the bowl on the table and clumps heavily over to right door calling loudly.*

NELLY. Simon! Si-mon! (*With hand to mouth, calls more loudly.*) Si—mon! Will you come before next Easter Day? (*With hands on hips and lips firm, she waits.*)

SIMON (*speaking off right, drawlingly*). Cry out a little louder, Nelly dear, and they will hear you next Easter.

NELLY. Come here, I bid you. (*Stamps her foot heavily.*)

SIMON (*off right, drawing nearer*). Aye, aye, but where is the earthquake?

Enter SIMON *at right, good-humoredly grinning and steering a wide course around* NELLY *to go to left of table.*

SIMON. It would be a woman who would call upon a busy baker, when he is pondering an important matter. (*He rolls down his floury sleeve.*)

NELLY. Important, is it? And pray what matter would it be? (*She comes to right of table.*) Is it what to do with the hot cross-buns that you could not sell?

SIMON (*with dignity*). They are all gone. My buns are never left over. I was trying to mix a new cake for Easter—a special Easter cake (*he gets aroused and*

struts across back and toward right front, hands behind back, planning great things) that would make me famous—a new cake—

NELLY (*stopping his march with a hand upon his collar*). Why, that is what *I* thought of! I thought of it first.

SIMON. Huh! I must have mentioned it. It is my idea! (*Shakes her off and continues to dream.*) A beautiful new cake, light and lovely as the spring!

NELLY (*facing him and wagging her finger at him, at center*). You heard me musing aloud as I mixed. It is *my* idea! (*Nods rapidly and wags finger in time, preventing him from passing her.*)

SIMON (*giving up the unequal battle good-humoredly*). Let be, then. (*He shrugs.*) The one whose cakes are the best will claim the idea. A truce, eh, my Nelly? (*Peers into bowl upon table and sniffs.*) What mixture did you try?

NELLY (*snatching bowl from under his nose*). You'll not steal mine, Master Simon. I shall not tell you one single thing in mine—not one bit o' currant.

SIMON (*pointing finger at her, teasingly*). So! 'Tis a fruit cake—nothing new. Not at all fitting for Easter, my Nelly. (*Shakes his head and trots to left. Clasps his hands in ecstasy.*) Ah! *My* Easter cake shall be delicate as a violet, sweet as the sap of the maple tree, and freshly-colored as a tulip. And light! (*Blows on both hands and pretends to watch something rise lightly into the air.*) Ah! It shall be as light as a petal of a rose!

NELLY (*sniffing scornfully*). Huh! An ordinary sponge cake! That is not new!

SIMON (*beginning to jig around her and in front of her, teasingly*). No, no, no, no, no! You are wrong. You'd never guess it, never! No, no, no!

NELLY (*exasperated*). Stop! (*She follows him and finally seizes his sleeve.*) You'd be a kitchen scullion still if I had not taught you how to make good

things. You learned all from me. (*She struts behind table.*)

SIMON. Ho! (*Standing beside her, mocking.*) You did not know flour from sand, when you first came into my bread shop. (*Laughs.*) And a slow pupil you have been, forsooth! (*Sighs loudly.*)

NELLY (*thoroughly aroused, lifting bowl high*). I'll not be slow to break this bowl over your empty head, Master Simon.

SIMON (*backing, shielding head with arm, and grinning*). Spare the bowl, my Nelly. It cost four bits.

NELLY. A slow pupil, is it? I'll show you that the pupil has outstripped the master. (*She clumps toward left and stops.*) My new Easter cakes shall make me rich. I shall wear satin and jewels (*she waves an imaginary fan and looks coy*), and leave you, poor Simon, to sweat over the oven!

SIMON (*at right, waving a scoffing hand at her*). When the gentry taste my Easter cakes, the gold will pour in, and I shall ride in a coach in state. Ha, ha! Good-bye, my Nelly! (*Laughs.*)

NELLY. The gentry shall taste mine first, for (*triumphantly, ready to go out at left*) mine are already made! (*Exit at left, slamming door.*)

SIMON (*shouting after her, as he backs toward right door*). So are mine! (*Exit at right, leaving his door open.*)

NELLY *reënters almost immediately, carefully carrying a flat tin with small cakes upon it, hurries to center, and almost collides with* SIMON, *who reënters from right, his eyes upon the tin of cakes which he is carrying.*

NELLY. I shall be first with my beauties. They shall be called Nelly cakes. (*She offers cakes toward front, calling.*) Nelly cakes for Easter! Hot, sweet Nelly cakes for Easter!

SIMON (*barring her from front with one arm, as he advances with ingratiating smiles to right and left, proffering his cakes*). Simon cakes for Easter! Hot, sweet Simon cakes for Easter!

NELLY (*scuffling with him for front place*). Nelly cakes!

SIMON (*protecting his precious cakes from her hands*). Si-mon cakes for Easter!

(NELLY, *with a quick movement, snatches one of his cakes and bites it.* SIMON *loses no time in retaliating. He tastes. Both look blankly at each other, then at cakes, then at each other again.*)

NELLY. Why—they are the same!

SIMON (*taking a huge bite appreciatively*). Um-m-m! Just the same. (*Smacks lips.*)

NELLY. But they are Nelly cakes. (*Pushing him backward.*)

SIMON (*shakes his head, still devouring his cake*). No, no. Simon cakes.

(*He stands directly in front of her. They are about to quarrel, when the sound of church bells is heard from off stage. Their anger vanishes at once.*)

NELLY (*solemnly*). Christ is risen!

SIMON (*bowing his head*). He is risen, indeed!

NELLY (*conciliatingly*). Simon. (*Holds her hand out to him.*)

SIMON (*taking her hand*). Good wife, we cannot have strife on Easter Day.

NELLY. You are right. (*Brightly.*) I have a good thought.

SIMON. Tell it to me.

NELLY. The new Easter cakes shall be called Sim-nel cakes. Do you see? For Simon and Nelly: Sim-nel cakes. (*Smiling.*) How do you like that?

SIMON (*slapping his knee with his free hand*). A

wonderful brain you have, my Nelly; a wonderful brain! You have taught me all I know. A wonderful brain! (*He wags his head admiringly and executes a little jig.*) Sim-nel cakes!

NELLY. Oh, I have not taught you anything, Simon. I knew naught when I came into the bread shop. You did show me everything. But (*links her free arm in his*), let us go and sell our cakes.

SIMON. Yes. See. (*Pointing to audience.*) The Easter crowd is gathering. Sim-nel cakes, Sim-nel cakes for Easter! (*As they both advance, the curtain begins to fall.*)

NELLY. Hot! Sweet! Light as a petal! Sim-nel cakes for Easter!

(*The curtain is nearly down;* SIMON *and* NELLY *stoop low, smiling, and offer their cakes still, until the curtain shuts them from view. Then their cry comes from behind it once more.*)

BOTH. Sim-nel cakes for Easter!

(*If there is no curtain, they may go off together at left, still crying their wares.*)

THE SEED OF RESURRECTION

(*Recitation for an older pupil*)

I look about on Easter fair,
And I am moved to praise and pray'r
For warm green sod;
'Tis strange that some whom men call wise
Can shout up at the blue spring skies,
"There is no God!"

Once such a one, a haughty dame,
Long known for wealth and pow'r and fame,
Did loud deride,
And far and wide from venomed tongue,
The arrows of her scorn she flung
At the Crucified!

She met with coldness and rejection
The promise sweet of resurrection,
Defiant, proud!
"My tomb," she scoffed, "will be so deep
That I shall never wake from sleep
For trumpet loud!"

They laid her still form there one day,
Within a pond'rous tomb so gray,
Close sealed withal!
But ere they dropped the stony lid,
All unperceived, within, there hid
An acorn small.

The years fled o'er the scoffer's grave,
And lo, the tiny seedling brave,
Its sleep time done,
Groped up, invincible as light,
And burst its stony bonds with might
And saw the sun!

The pond'rous tomb did crack and yawn,
A young green oak, one Easter dawn,
Rose o'er her head;
A mighty tree it grew, more wide,
With friendly branches where birds hide
Above the dead.

For planets in their paths ne'er quail,
Nor destinies eternal fail
By our election;

For whether man says, "aye" or "no,"
Within his soul a seed doth grow
Of resurrection!

THE MESSAGE OF THE PALMS

(Exercise for three boys and eleven girls)

CHARACTERS

YOUTH	CONQUEROR
MAKER OF THORN WREATHS	FIRST PALM BEARER
VENDOR OF CROSSES	SECOND PALM BEARER
FIRST FLOWER GATHERER	THIRD PALM BEARER
SECOND FLOWER GATHERER	FOURTH PALM BEARER
THIRD FLOWER GATHERER	FIFTH PALM BEARER
FOURTH FLOWER GATHERER	SIXTH PALM BEARER

COSTUMES.—Youth is a boy, wearing a Greek tunic of white, trimmed with bands of gold. The Maker of Thorn Wreaths is a girl, wearing a long red robe with a hood. The Vendor of Crosses is a boy, dressed in a long black robe with a hood. The four flower gatherers are younger girls, dressed in Greek robes of pink, blue, violet, and orchid respectively, with sandals and stockings to match. Each flower girl carries a basket of artificial flowers. The Conqueror is a tall boy wearing a purple tunic trimmed with bands of gold. The six palm bearers are girls of about the same age as the flower gatherers, wearing golden yellow robes trimmed with purple bands, with sandals and stockings to match. Each girl carries a palm branch.

SCENE: *The stage is hung with heavy, dark draperies at the sides and rear, with four entrances up left and down left, up right and down right respectively, made by looping the draperies aside. Up center is a small*

platform, two steps high, in front of which are hung curtains on a wire, which part in the center on cue to show the platform. A strip of carpet leads from down center up to the platform, which may also be carpeted, if desired. At extreme left center is a low stool, and at extreme right center is a small table, behind which is a high stool. If possible the stage should be provided with a curtain.

At rise of curtain, YOUTH *stands down right, gazing dreamily into space, the* MAKER OF THORN WREATHS *sits at left center with a pile of thorn branches beside her, weaving them into wreaths, and the* VENDOR OF CROSSES *sits at the table at right center, with his arms crossed on the table, on which are several roughly-made wooden crosses. If there is no curtain, these characters may enter at different entrances and take their places as designated. Immediately upon rise of the curtain, the* FOUR FLOWER GATHERERS *dance in lightly, each at a different door, carrying their baskets of flowers, which they toss in all directions. They meet at center and face the audience in a straight, horizontal line.*

FIRST FLOWER GATHERER.

Where the Conqueror doth tread,
Flowers bloom beneath his feet:
Blossoms rich and honey sweet,
Gold and white and blue and red!

SECOND FLOWER GATHERER.

When the Conqueror doth pass,
Spread a robe of violet,
'Broidered thick with mignonette,
On the velvet of the grass.

THIRD FLOWER GATHERER.

Where the Conqueror doth look,
Make twin beauties for his eyes:
Gentian matching bluest skies,
Trillium stars beside the brook.

FOURTH FLOWER GATHERER.

When the Conqueror doth come,
How each burdened bee doth pause,
Stills awhile his wings of gauze,
Beats his tiny, throbbing drum!

(The four girls march down center, shoulder to shoulder, then turn to right, march in single file for a short distance along front, and turn up right, where they halt, facing left.)

The SIX PALM BEARERS *enter in couples, up left, while from the rear the* CONQUEROR, *unseen by the audience, quietly slips into his place on the platform behind the curtains, which, of course, hide him completely. The six girls march along rear, around one side of platform and down center, each holding a palm in the right hand. When the first couple reach the front, all three couples halt and recite while they face the audience.*

SIX PALM BEARERS (*in concert*).

Lo, he comes! The Conqueror cometh!
All his foes have fall'n before him;
And the palms, exulting, waving,
Lift his message proud, triumphant,
Lift his victory resplendent
On green wings e'en unto heaven.

The FLOWER GATHERERS *take two short steps to center, turn to face the rear, and march up the carpet to the platform, strewing flowers as they go. At the platform, the first two girls turn to the right and take their places at the right corner of the platform, while the second pair turn left and halt at left corner. At the same time, the* PALM BEARERS, *at center front, divide, the three at left of center turning left and the three at right turning right. They march along front and up their respective sides until they are opposite the platform. Here they*

turn and march across rear until the leaders reach the corners of the platform, where they turn and march diagonally a little way toward lower right and left corners, respectively, of the stage. The others follow, bending the lines a little to form two semicircles. All halt and face center.

FIRST PALM BEARER.
Palms like green swords of a warrior,
SECOND PALM BEARER.
Palms like fingers green and strong;
THIRD PALM BEARER.
Palms like keen and sharp green arrows,
FOURTH PALM BEARER.
Palms like banners waving proud!
FIFTH PALM BEARER.
Hear the victory they are telling,
SIXTH PALM BEARER.
Hear the message of the palms!

The draperies before the platform are parted, and the CONQUEROR *appears on platform, the* PALM BEARERS *holding palms high toward him, while he assumes a pose of triumph and exaltation, his eyes turned upward. When the pose has been held for a moment,* YOUTH *starts forward eagerly; then the draperies are slowly drawn, concealing the* CONQUEROR. YOUTH *comes almost to center and pauses, half facing the platform.*

YOUTH (*to* PALM BEARERS).
I would learn of ye, Palm Bearers,
Teach me, too, the Conqueror's way;
I would fain, by palms surrounded,
Tread his path 'mid loud acclaim;
Fain would I walk as he walketh,
Proud and strong, invincible!
All my enemies o'erwhelming,
Never tasting of defeat,

O'er a path bestrewn with flowers,
I would follow in his steps,
On fame's pedestal imposing,
Gain the homage of the world.

(*The* FLOWER GATHERERS *dance down to* YOUTH, *strewing flowers in his path, and stand before him.*)

FOUR FLOWER GATHERERS.

We have blossoms for your feet,
Soft we make your path, and sweet,
We have beauty for your pleasure;
Lavish, brimming, lovely treasure!

YOUTH (*hands out, coming up center a little way*).

I shall walk in rainbow glory,
Satin-soft, and velvet-fine;
Life shall brook no thorn to pierce me,
Only roses shall be mine!

(*The* PALM BEARERS, *advancing, three on each side, push the* FLOWER GATHERERS *back to their places near the platform and bar* YOUTH'S *way on the carpet.*)

SIX PALM BEARERS (*in unison*).

Foolish Youth, so greatly daring,
By false promises deluded,
Know ye that no conqueror ever
Saw the palms in glory waving,
Till his heart had met with anguish,
Walking in the Street of Sorrows.

YOUTH (*recoiling, with hands out in protest*).

Bearers of palms, I implore ye,
Point me out an easier way:
Guide me where palm branches, waving,
Hail me for a conqueror bold.

FIRST PALM BEARER (*turning to right side, coldly shaking her head*).

He who would attain to power,
He must first learn to obey.

SECOND PALM BEARER (*going to left and shaking his head*).

He who'd taste the sweets of conquest,
Failure's dregs must learn to drain.

THIRD PALM BEARER (*going to right, beside* FIRST).

No one treads in rose-strewn pathways,
Whose bare feet have felt no thorn;

FOURTH PALM BEARER (*going to left, beside* SECOND).

None as heroes are acclaiméd,
Whom the rabble have not scorned;

FIFTH PALM BEARER (*going to right, beside* THIRD).

Dare ye hope to wield the scepter,
If ye have not borne your cross?

SIXTH PALM BEARER (*going to left, beside* FOURTH).

Or aspire to life eternal,
Never having tasted death?

As the PALM BEARERS *resume their semicircular formation, the draperies before the platform are drawn to reveal the* CONQUEROR, *standing with bent shoulders, head to one side, arms half hiding his face, in an attitude of sorrow and weariness. After a moment, the draperies shut the figure from sight again.*

YOUTH (*facing front, eyes looking far away*).

Though the vision doth appall me,
Though the cross be hard to bear,
Yet I'll gird me with endurance,
Wear the thorn wreath, uncomplaining,
Humbly, bravely walk with anguish,
With my eyes upon the goal.

(YOUTH *goes to left and faces the* MAKER OF THORN WREATHS, *holding out his hand.*)

MAKER OF THORN WREATHS (*rising*).

I am the Maker of Thorn Wreaths
For every immortal soul;
Take ye this chaplet and wear it,
Walk in the street known to sorrow,
For the servant is not ever greater
Than the Master who walked there before him.

(YOUTH *accepts the wreath in his left hand and crosses to right, facing the* VENDOR *of* CROSSES.)

VENDOR OF CROSSES (*offering a small, slender cross*).

I am the Vendor of Crosses
For every frail human spirit;
Lift up your burden and bear it,
Walk in the street known to sorrow,
For the servant never is greater
Than the Master who walked there before him.

(*The* YOUTH *takes the cross in his right hand and goes to center front.*)

YOUTH.

Sharp the thorns be for my wearing,
Since He bowed His thorn-crowned head!
Heavy be my cross' grim burden,
Since man's hand has shaped the rood!
Sweeter will be the rewarding,
When man walks where He has trod.

PALM BEARERS, MAKER OF THORN WREATHS, *and* VENDOR OF CROSSES (*speaking in unison*).

Take up thy burden and bear it,
Walk in the steps of thy God.

(*The* FLOWER GATHERERS *take two short steps down toward* YOUTH *and each throws a single flower from her basket in his direction.*)

FOUR FLOWER GATHERERS.

Even in the Street of Sorrows,
Where the thorns of sorrow grow;

Even there, Hope, Faith, and Charity,
Rarest of all blossoms, blow.

(*The* FLOWER GATHERERS *return to their places.* YOUTH *walks stumblingly a few steps up center. The* PALM BEARERS *step to the carpet and march down in couples to meet him.*)

SIX PALM BEARERS.
And, when life's brief struggle's over,
All thy valiant battles won,
Gentle hands shall lift thy burden,
(FIRST PALM BEARER *takes the cross from* YOUTH.)
For the thorn bestow a crown.
He who dares with death to wrestle
Seeth resurrection morn.

(THIRD PALM BEARER *takes the thorn wreath from* YOUTH. SECOND *and* FOURTH PALM BEARERS *take a hand of* YOUTH *on either side and lead him to the edge of the platform. The draperies part, showing the empty platform, the* CONQUEROR *having gone out between the draperies at back.* YOUTH *steps upon the platform and turns to face front. The* FLOWER GATHERERS *dance a few steps down stage, then turn and dance in couples up to the platform between the two lines of* PALM BEARERS, *tossing their flowers with lavish gestures toward* YOUTH. *The* PALM BEARERS *step back into the places at the corners of the platform occupied by the* FLOWER GATHERERS, *and the latter remain at center, two on each side of the carpet.*)

FOUR FLOWER GATHERERS.
As the dew-tears on the flowers
Lend their fragrance added graces,
So he finds homecoming sweetest
Who has walked in lonely places;
As that blossom is the dearest
That was nourished in the clod,

So must all, with pain and striving,
Work their long way up to God.

The two PALM BEARERS *nearest center step up on the platform and take places at either side and a little in front of* YOUTH. *The next two step up on the first step about midway between center and the corners. The last two stand on the floor at the two lower corners of the platform.*

FIRST PALM BEARER.
He has heard the ancient wisdom,
Heard the message of the palms;
Valiant striven, humbly suffered,
Down the Street of Sorrows long!

THIRD PALM BEARER.
Now the palms acclaim him conqueror,
On this radiant Easter dawn;
For the cross and thorn of anguish,
Palms will weave for him a crown.

(*The four* PALM BEARERS *below the platform now step up and group themselves around* YOUTH, *holding their palms in such a way as to enclose his body in a frame: two palms above his head, two held vertically at his sides, and two crossed low in front of him. The* FLOWER GATHERERS *dance round and round below the platform, tossing flowers to* YOUTH.)

FOUR FLOWER GATHERERS (*pausing near the steps*).
He shall walk 'mid blossoms sweet,
For he hath felt the piercing thorn;

SIX PALM BEARERS (*loudly*).
He shall triumph and be glad,
On this resurrection morn!

(*All may pose in a tableau, if desired. If there is no front curtain, the curtain in front of the platform may*

be drawn, while those on the stage below march off to music, by the lower right and left entrances.

THE SOLDIER AT THE TOMB

(*Monologue for an older boy*)

COSTUME.—The boy wears the dress of a Roman soldier of the time of Christ. He wears a helmet with top ridge and chin strap, covered with silver paper, while strips of silver paper form a cuirass, with strips also hanging over the short skirt of the cuirass. His arms are bare. Sandals are laced on his feet and brown cloth covers his legs to the knees. He carries a long silver spear. A rock made of gray building paper may form a setting, but is not essential.

The SOLDIER *enters, yawning, and slouches to center front.*

SOLDIER. Ho! A wearisome task and a cold one, guarding a tomb on a chill night like this! (*To an imaginary comrade.*) Move over a little, Malthus. I would try if thy stone be softer than this. I would sleep these dragging hours away. Afraid to sleep, sayest thou, Malthus? Not I.

How should Pilate ever know—or care? He was slow enough to condemn this man. Did you not hear him plead with the rabble: "I find no evil in him"? (*The* SOLDIER *paces excitedly to left.*)

By Jupiter, Pilate was afraid to condemn the man, and afraid to rouse the wrath of the dogs of Jews! He's a craven weakling, I say, Malthus. Huh! The great Roman governor Pilate, a coward, a weakling! (*Gesticulates with his spear, striding proudly across front to right.*)

I—I should have faced that unshaven mob, and I

should have defied them thus: "The Nazarene is innocent! Get ye gone, Jewish dogs!" (*Laughs triumphantly.*)

Ha! "If they had stormed the palace," thou sayest? (*Holds both arms up, with spear pointed forward, speaking fiercely.*) By the gods of war, I should have set my soldiery upon them to cut them down like chaff! (*Sits on floor facing audience and suddenly looks sad and dreamy.*) For the Nazarene had a gentle look, Malthus. Didst see him? Yea, a gentle and a kingly mien. (*Pauses, in deep thought, then turns and speaks over his shoulder.*)

Malthus, Malthus! Art sleeping? I say the man had a kingly bearing. And he said he was a king. Thinkest thou he was a king, Malthus? (*Shakes his head.*) But he could not be a king, being a Nazarene, for nothing good can come out of Nazareth.

And he is dead—quite dead (*yawns and stretches comfortably*), and 'tis a stupid task to guard a dead man. The Jewish high priests say they fear the disciples of this man will take his body from the tomb. Folly! Old priests' folly! Why should they bear away a body that is already nearly forty hours in the tomb? Faugh!

I am going to sleep until the dawn. Move over, Malthus. (*He straightens suddenly, startled.*) What sayest thou? He said he would rise from the dead on the third day? He said that? (*Rises and looks around fearfully.*) Malthus, what if he were a king? What if he were the—? (*He shakes the imaginary companion.*) Don't sleep! I—I am strangely stirred.

What if he should rise as he said? (*Walks a few paces, his eyes straying here and there, but gradually grows calm and laughs a little in a nervous manner.*) But that is impossible. The stone is a ponderous one, and he is dead. I saw him die. I have strange fancies. But I am tired; that is the reason for them. So I will rest.

(*He settles down upon the ground and closes his eyes. After a brief pause, from off stage, a low rumbling comes, ominous and strange, and the* SOLDIER *sits erect.*)

Malthus! (*Nudging imaginary companion.*) Didst feel the earth tremble? (*More loudly, rising.*) Malthus! Wake! Wake the others! The earth trembles and (*puts hand out in terror, eyes wide*)—the stone, the stone! (*Shrinks backward, right hand covering his eyes.*) See, Malthus! Canst see? (*Holds both hands to face, stumbling and backing.*)

I am blind! But He is— Ah, He is the Son of God! (*In an awed tone.*) And He has risen, as He said! (*Suddenly with gathering strength, his eyes closed and hands out gropingly, he shouts in a great voice.*) Son of God, save me! (*Stumbles and falls.*) Save—me! (*Lies prostrate on his face as curtains are drawn.*)

IN JOSEPH'S GARDEN

(*Recitation for a girl*)

The girl enters, wearing a flowing white robe, white hose and sandals, and large white wings wired to stand out. If there is a curtain, it may rise to show her posed against dark draperies at center rear, eyes up and hands folded upon breast. When she begins to speak, she glides noiselessly down to front.

I have seen Earth's beautiful gardens
In far western lands and East,
Since creation's dawn of splendor,
When God fashioned bird and beast.
(*She glides to the right with right hand upraised.*)

I have seen Earth's beautiful gardens,
Even Eden's peerless bowers,
Where Eve tasted of sin's venom,
Lurking in forbidden flowers.
(*She glides backward and to the left.*)

I have seen Earth's beautiful gardens,
Snows unseen of mortal eye,
Tropic blooms of flame and topaz,
Mignonette and primrose shy.
(*She glides toward left front.*)

I have seen Earth's beautiful gardens
Veiled in gauze, flung from the moon,
(*Draws one wing over her breast.*)
Shedding jeweled tears at dawning,
(*Holds other wing up, head bending low.*)
Trailing rainbow robes at noon.

(*With wings back and head high and thrown back, she glides forward a step or two.*)

But the fairest of Earth's gardens
(*Spreads out her arms.*)
Once I saw in Palestine,
Dazzling, blinding mortal vision,
When on it God's face did shine!

(*She pauses in the pose of awe and adoration, then suddenly springs toward right, hands caught rapturously to breast, face alight, poised on toes a moment.*)

Oh, Joseph of Arimathea!
Did you know that each brown clod
On that Easter morn would quicken
'Neath the footsteps of your God?
(*She glides slowly backward to center rear.*)

I have seen Earth's beautiful gardens,
But I bow, while all hearts sing,
(*Holds up both wings, bowing head.*)
Over Joseph's sacred garden
(*Head up, hands clasped.*)
Where he rose—my Lord and King!

(*She poses as the curtains are drawn.*)

THE BIRDS' EASTER FESTIVAL

(*Exercise for nine boys and nine girls*)

CHARACTERS

Boys	*Girls*
ROBIN	BLUEBIRD
BALTIMORE ORIOLE	WREN
SPARROW	BLUE JAY
RAVEN	GOLDFINCH
CARDINAL	THRUSH
WOODPECKER	LARK
SWALLOW	CATBIRD
MARTIN	HUMMINGBIRD
BOBOLINK	CHICKADEE

COSTUMES.—The bird costumes may be easily made of crêpe paper, in all the natural colors. In case only a very simple production is possible, each bird may wear his or her name on a band across a plain suit or dress.

SCENE: *A bird sanctuary, in a grove in spring. Branches are thick at back, some bearing pink and white blossoms, some evergreen. At center is a bird fountain, which may be made of building paper over a thin wooden frame, finished in gray and surrounded by flowers in low pots, which are concealed by moss.*

Branches at sides permit birds to enter at several places on both sides. Wood wings may be used at left and right, if they are available. Here and there, in the trees, are nests of different birds. At center back is arranged, apparently in a tree, but securely nailed to a strong support covered by branches, a seat to be used as the throne. It is Easter morning.

At rise of curtain, all birds, hidden behind trees at sides of stage, whistle, at first softly, then more and more loudly and spiritedly, the tune of "Listen to the Mocking Bird," accompanied by pianist. The light on the stage is rather dim at first, but it brightens as chorus swells. Any birds who are accomplished whistlers may adorn the chorus with variations.

When the song has been whistled, and the curtain is well up, the music ceases, and the RAVEN *pokes his black bonnet in through branches at right, frowning and screaming.*

RAVEN. Caw! Caw! Caw! (*He comes out in full view, flapping his wings and stalking across stage.*) Stop that warbling, will you, for a minute? (*He screams toward both sides of stage.*) I'd like silence, and precious little of that! My head! Caw, caw, caw!

BLUE JAY (*coming briskly through from left, and hopping fussily up to* RAVEN). Caw, caw, caw yourself! (*She wags first one wing, then the other, at him.*) If you think that the rest of us birds are going to be as dumb as oysters, and never sing a note when you are about, you're mistaken! (*She rattles on rapidly and crossly.*) We don't give a flap of our wings for you (*wagging wings faster and closer to him*), you critchety-crotchety, croaking crutch! If you don't like to hear us sing, why do you invite yourself to our Easter festival every year? (*She flaps over to right.*) You were croaking last year, and you are croaking this year, and if you last until next year, you will still be croaking.

RAVEN. Stop! (*Puts wings forward and hunches up.*) Stop that chattering! Wherever you see a blue jay, she's chattering. I should think you'd wear out your throat!

BLUE JAY. And I should think you'd crack yours. Caw, caw, caw! (*Imitating him.*)

BOBOLINK (*from off right*). Bobolink, spink, spink, spink!

CHICKADEE (*from off left*). Chickadee-dee-dee!

WOODPECKER, *somewhere off stage, raps hard on a tree.* RAVEN *and* BLUE JAY *draw apart. Enter, at different points between branches,* WREN, GOLDFINCH, THRUSH, SPARROW, WOODPECKER, SWALLOW, CATBIRD, MARTIN, HUMMINGBIRD, CHICKADEE, *and* BOBOLINK, *all flapping wings smilingly at* RAVEN *and* BLUE JAY, *as they come in irregular groups to front. Pianist plays softly the chorus of "Listen to the Mocking Bird," and the birds recite teasingly to the music of the chorus.*

BIRDS.

Oh, the Raven loves to croak,
And the Blue Jay loves to joke,
They're just as even-tempered as can be!
He tells her she talks too much;
(*Heads on one side.*)
She calls him a croaking crutch!
(*Heads on other side.*)
'Tis fine to note how sweetly they agree.

(*All break up into groups, laughing.*)

BLUEBIRD (*coming near fountain and looking about*). I think it is lovely in this sanctuary. It is the most beautiful place we could have chosen for our annual Easter festival. Isn't it?

RAVEN (*strutting about discontentedly*). Caw! It's no good. Not a cornfield within a mile of the place!

BLUE JAY (*right after him*). You're not happy un-

less you are robbing some poor farmer. It's time you mended your ways and remembered to be thankful for sunshine and warm breezes and green trees and—

RAVEN (*interrupting crossly*). Oh, be still, chatterer. I can't eat sunshine and breezes and trees!

BLUE JAY (*close to him*). I won't be still. I—

MARTIN (*coming between the two*). Come, come, friends! This is no time for disagreements or bickering. (*He pats them both on the back.*) We are only waiting for the Cardinal and the Robin and the Oriole and a few others; then we'll open our annual Easter festival with our song of thankfulness to God. (*He leads* RAVEN *to right.*) And then there'll be the contests and the eats and fun for everyone. But you two must try to agree.

RAVEN. But, Martin, she (*poking a wing in* BLUE JAY'S *direction*) is such a nuisance! She's such a chatterer! Caw! (*Shakes his head.*)

WOODPECKER. Peenk! Peenk! (*He flip-flaps comically down center.*) Stop knocking, Raven. I'm the only fellow who has a license to rap. (*Taps a tree sharply three times with his finger nails, and all laugh.*)

GOLDFINCH. Tcheer! Tcheer! I don't know why anyone should knock anyone else, when we are all so happy here (*coming to left of fountain*) and so safe. Do you know, friends, that the same dear lady who keeps this sanctuary for us grows sunflowers in her garden just for me?

SWALLOW (*quickly joining* GOLDFINCH). Oh, she does? Where is her garden? I'll be over.

WREN (*running up right and looking off right*). Oh, here comes the Baltimore Oriole. Isn't he handsome? (*Comes skipping back, wings agitated by finger tips.*) Oh, dear, I wish I were pretty! (*Sighs and leans upon fountain at back of it.*)

RAVEN (*very impolitely*). Caw, caw! If wishes were horses, beggars would ride.

BLUE JAY (*coming to put an arm across* WREN'S

shoulders). Oh, caw yourself! You critchety-crotchety, croaking crutch, you—

BOBOLINK (*whirling* BLUE JAY *about twice and laughing*). Bobolink! Bobolink! Don't get all wound up again, Blue Jay.

BLUEBIRD. Listen! (*From off left,* ROBIN *whistles thrice.*) That's dear Robin Redbreast. (*She flaps her wings and goes to left.*) Yes, and our tiniest friend, Hummingbird, too. (*She whistles thrice, and* ROBIN *answers again.*)

The LARK *trips lightly in at right, while all are looking toward left.*

LARK. Tseet! Tseet!

(*All turn and run to her except* RAVEN.)

THRUSH. Welcome, Lark. There's no one else to come now; is there?

Enter ROBIN, HUMMINGBIRD, *and* ORIOLE *at left.*

ORIOLE. The Cardinal is coming as our guest of honor, you know.

ALL (*except* RAVEN). Good! Fine! (*All whistle shrilly.*)

RAVEN. Humph! (*Turns his back upon the others.*) The Cardinal thinks he's great because he is red. Caw!

BLUE JAY (*quickly*). Humph! And the Raven thinks he's great because he's black. Caw!

ORIOLE. Hush! He's coming.

All except RAVEN *run joyfully up stage as the* CARDINAL *enters from right, coming in front of fountain and smiling around upon all.*

ALL (*except* RAVEN). Welcome, Cardinal. (*All whistle shrilly.*)

ORIOLE (*coming to center and half facing* CARDINAL *as he speaks*).

Welcome, friend, in your scarlet coat,
So beautiful and gay!
Welcome to our Easter festival
On this sunny Easter Day.

(ORIOLE *bows low and steps back toward right.*)

CARDINAL.

Let us raise our grateful song
Of thankfulness and praise,
In this peaceful sanctuary, to
The Author of our days.

(*The birds group about fountain and sing, to the tune of "There's Music in the Air."*)

ALL BIRDS (*singing*).

Thy wingéd creatures praise thee,
Lord of life and King of all,
From mighty eagle soaring,
To the hummingbird so small;
For the spring's sweet-scented air,
For the flow'rs, surpassing fair,
This glad Easter, we rejoice,
And we sing with grateful voice.

We praise thee for thy beauty,
When the dawning paints the skies,
And thank thee for thy blessings,
When the day in splendor dies.
Each green bud that's born again
Says thou hast not died in vain;
So this Easter we shall raise
Our exultant song of praise.

CARDINAL (*as groups break up and music ceases*). Now it would be quite nice of the Woodpecker to drum for us while we have a march, if you all agree.

(*All birds except* RAVEN *nod and clap wings, and* WOODPECKER, *coming to center, begins to clap his hands together irregularly, hollowing palms to give the deadened rap of a bird's bill against a tree.*)

WOODPECKER. Rat-tat-tat! Fall into line! Company, 'tention! (*Claps fiercely.*)

RAVEN (*at extreme left*). Caw, caw, caw! Foolish business!

WOODPECKER. Come on, there, Raven. The Blue Jay's your partner. Rat-tat-tat!

RAVEN (*flapping quickly over to extreme right*). Caw! She talks too much.

BLUE JAY. Caw! He's a croaking crutch.

(*The others, laughing, push the* RAVEN *and* BLUE JAY *together at center front, and the line forms as music of "There's Music in the Air" begins again, spiritedly, in march time. Partners are as follows:* CARDINAL *and* LARK, ORIOLE *and* WREN, SPARROW *and* THRUSH, SWALLOW *and* GOLDFINCH, MARTIN *and* CATBIRD, WOODPECKER *and* CHICKADEE, BOBOLINK *and* HUMMINGBIRD, ROBIN *and* BLUEBIRD, *and, reluctantly bringing up the rear, glaring at each other as they march,* RAVEN *and* BLUE JAY. *As song is played through twice, the line circles stage in ever-widening circles, using a light march step,* WOODPECKER *accompanying pianist with his clapping. Toward the end of the music, they break the ring and fly to the four corners of stage, laughing and whistling.*)

RAVEN (*propping his chin upon fountain, and frowning*). Caw! Foolish business!

ALL THE OTHERS (*pointing wing tips to* RAVEN). Oh, the Raven loves to croak.

BLUE JAY. That's all he can do, the critchety-crotchety—

ALL THE OTHERS. And the Blue Jay loves to joke! Ha, ha! (*Pointing to* BLUE JAY.)

CARDINAL. Now, I'm sure that we would all enjoy a singing contest. With so many sweet singers (*he bows right and left to the lady birds*), it will be hard to decide who wins.

ROBIN (*coming beside* CARDINAL). Why not let the Lark and the Oriole compete first? Everyone likes to hear them sing.

CARDINAL. A splendid idea! And the applause of the other birds will decide which one wins.

(*The* ORIOLE *gallantly takes hand of* LARK *and leads her to center. Pianist begins to play "Santa Lucia" softly and they sing.*)

LARK (*singing*).
High in the azure field,
Singing, I love to stray;
ORIOLE. I love the orchard sweet,
Where happy children play.
LARK. In meadow hollow snug,
Hidden, my cradle lies;
ORIOLE. Each breeze o'er my nest sings
Low lullabies.
LARK. Perchance I'll find a star,
Singing and soaring far!
ORIOLE. My heart shall never roam
From my dear happy home;
LARK. Perchance a sunbeam bright
I'll bring back from my flight!
ORIOLE. Home's ever sweetest,
Its joys completest.

(*As the music ceases,* CARDINAL *holds up a wing.*)

CARDINAL. Now applause for the Oriole. (*The birds applaud with their wings and whistle.*) Now, for the little Lark, please. (*Birds applaud more loudly and longer.*)

ORIOLE (*taking* LARK's *hand again and bowing low*).

The Lady Lark wins, which is quite right and proper. (*He leads* LARK *to right.*)

LARK. Thank you all. (*Bows and smiles.*)

ORIOLE. Now, dear Cardinal, shall we choose our king of the festival? Every year at Easter time, we choose as our king the bird who has done the noblest act during the year gone by, or whose ancestors have been most noble or kind.

CARDINAL. Very well. Let us hear your claims, friends.

RAVEN (*coming quickly to pluck at* CARDINAL'S *sleeve*). I should be king, because I am strong and bold and brave and cunning and—

BLUE JAY (*plucking at* CARDINAL *from other side*). And cross and crotchety and cranky and cantankerous and—

RAVEN (*screaming*). Caw, caw, caw! Stop her! I should be king!

CATBIRD (*in a shrill voice*). Take it away! Take it away!

ALL THE BIRDS (*flapping their wings and shouting teasingly*). Take it away! Take it away!

WOODPECKER. Of course, I wouldn't make a very imposing-looking monarch, but I *do* devour about a ton of injurious bugs in a year, and—

SPARROW. Better choose me. (*Struts mischievously across front.*) I know how to get along without working, and a king needs to know that. Doesn't he?

BOBOLINK. Well, my only claim is my cheerful disposition, but I should think a king would have use for that, too.

HUMMINGBIRD (*coming hesitatingly to center*). Please, may I say a word?

SWALLOW (*looking down upon her*). Hear, hear! The baby of the family wants the floor.

CARDINAL. What is it, pretty little Hummingbird?

HUMMINGBIRD. Dear Robin Redbreast should be king, but he is too modest to press his claim. Let him

tell you the beautiful story of what one of his ancestors did, long ago.

BIRDS (*crowding near* ROBIN). Do tell, Robin, do tell.

(ROBIN *comes slowly to center. The pianist plays some appropriate music ever so softly, as a mere thread of accompaniment to his voice, while he recites.*)

ROBIN. The day was black as midnight,
On that Friday men call Good;
The frightened earth did tremble
As Christ hung on the rood.

A robin, poised in wonder,
Above the scene of woe,
Felt pity flooding o'er him,
As he saw the life drops flow!

With care, a thorn he pluckéd
From out the anguished head,
And lo, the sacred blood
Did stain his bosom red!

A creature's deep compassion
The Savior thus had blest,
So from that day the Robin
Has worn a crimson breast!

(*A hush follows the story; heads are bowed, and no one moves. Then the* CARDINAL *puts out his hand to the* ROBIN, *and the birds all nod and crowd closer.*)

HUMMINGBIRD. He should be king. Dear Robin Redbreast should be king.

BLUEBIRD. Ah, yes; no other bird has such a beautiful claim.

ORIOLE. Such a beautiful, beautiful claim!

CARDINAL. If our Master has honored the Robin, should we not honor him, too?

ALL THE BIRDS (*in confused chorus*). Yes, yes! Cheer, cheer! Tseet, tseet! Bobolink! Chickadee-dee! (*Each bird gives his own cry. There is joyful confusion for a moment, then all speak in unison.*) Robin Redbreast shall be king!

CARDINAL *leads* ROBIN *to throne up center, and the other birds group themselves in even numbers on the two sides of the stage. When* ROBIN *has ascended to the throne, the two birds nearest the upper right and left corners, respectively, lead their groups down the sides of the stage and across to center front where they meet and go up center in couples. As each couple reaches the throne, they bow and flap their wings to* ROBIN, *then separate and return to their respective sides of the stage.* RAVEN, *instead of bowing to* ROBIN *in his turn, croaks an ill-tempered "Caw," and strays off to left by himself, apart from the others. The birds begin to sing to the air of the "Boola Song."*)

BOBOLINK.
We'll treat our king right royally,
ALL.
Feathered monarch never was more kind;
MARTIN.
We'll bring gold threads to trim his nest,
ALL.
And we'll feed him all the worms we find.
LARK.
We'll gather cherries ruby red,
THRUSH.
A royal feast we'll spread,
BLUEBIRD.
We'll sing the news each Easter Day,
ALL.
Robin Redbreast is our king for aye.

CHORUS

ALL (*singing in parts, if desired*).

Robin Redbreast!
(*All point wings to right.*)
Robin Redbreast!
(*All point wings to left.*)
Kingdoms crumble,
(*All clap hands once sharply.*)
War drums rumble,
(*All stamp left foot once, vigorously.*)
But in peace, still, we shall follow
(*All heads and nearest wings raised to* ROBIN.)
Robin Redbreast as our king.
(*All wings spread wide and heads high.*)

CARDINAL (*bowing before throne, then holding out his wings for attention*). Now before we go into the pine woods for our feast, shouldn't we sing once more our hymn of praise?

RAVEN (*grumpily, going to look off left*). Caw! I'm getting hungry.

BLUE JAY (*darting out of her place to start after* RAVEN *and flapping her wings*). Caw! You would! You'd like to go off and steal something, you critchety—

(BOBOLINK *seizes* BLUE JAY, *while the tiny* HUMMINGBIRD, *with a determined expression, draws* RAVEN *back into the group at back, by pulling on his wings.* ROBIN *rises, and all the birds, laughing, advance toward front. Looking up, they repeat opening chorus of thanks to tune of "There's Music in the Air."*)

ALL (*singing*).

Thy wingéd creatures praise thee,
Lord of life and King of all,
From mighty eagle, soaring,
To the hummingbird, so small;

For the spring's sweet-scented air,
For the flow'rs, surpassing fair,
This glad Easter, we rejoice,
And we sing with grateful voice.

We praise thee for thy beauty,
When the dawning paints the skies,
And thank thee for thy blessings,
When the day in splendor dies.
Each green bud that's born again
Says thou hast not died in vain;
So, this Easter, we shall raise
Our exultant song of praise.

(*The birds hold the pose of worship, looking up, wings folded, and slowly, as the last echo of the song dies, the curtain falls. If there is no curtain, the birds may skip off at the various entrances in irregular formation while the music of the last song is repeated.*)

EASTER BILLS

(*Monologue for an older boy*)

SCENE: *The stage is set with a small table or desk down center, with a chair behind it. On it are scattered a number of opened envelopes and folded papers resembling tradesmen's bills.*

The boy, who is giving a breezy impersonation of his father, enters, assuming a cross and worried expression, takes a spectacle case and a handkerchief from his pocket, takes a pair of spectacles out of the case and wipes them with the handkerchief, and sits at the table. A good comedy effect will be produced if spectacle frames without lenses are used. The boy takes up one of the bills and reads it, frowning terribly.

Boy. Humph! Bills! (*Nods sharply and looks at others lying before him.*) Easter bills! (*Glares at audience.*) Where's the guy that's been raving about Easter bells? It's Easter bills, bills, bills! (*Thrusts both hands under the pile of bills and, with a quick upward movement, tosses some up and around, so that they fall to the floor.*) I ask the world how is a man going to rise and be joyful on Easter morning when he is weighed down with tons of bills crushing him, like a ball and chain. (*Picks up another bill, opens it and reads it, then throws it down.*)

How can a man see the buds on the trees or the first tulips peeping up or anything else, when the bills, like little imps, are always dancing in front of his eyes! (*He rises, nearly overturning chair and paces rapidly back and forth in front of the table.*) The bluebirds sing their song; do they? (*Sarcastically.*) Well (*hands in pockets, he stops to thrust his head out at audience and glare*), I don't hear any bluebirds—I don't! All the music I can hear is: "Please remit," "Kindly settle," "Pay promptly" (*pokes out his hand each time*), "Come across"! (*Pauses, his expression fierce.*) That's all the music I can hear at Easter time, and it isn't (*goes back to chair*) grand opera, I'll tell the world!

(*He picks up a bill and reads.*) "To Grabem and Fleesem, one hat, fifty dollars." (*Settles back in chair, holding bill out at arm's length, and smiling bitterly.*) Indeed! A mere trifle—only fifty dollars for a hat! (*He mimics a woman's voice.*) "And just imagine, my dear, it's an exclusive model! Not another like it in town!" (*Sniffs.*) Huh! And the blamed thing meets itself on every corner. (*Tears the bill savagely into bits.*) Fifty dollars for a couple of ounces of straw and a hen's feather!

Now what's this one? (*Takes up another bill and reads.*) "To Madam Le—Le— (*Squints at name.*) Well, it's "Le-something-or-other"—I can't read French very well with these glasses. Anyway, it's for

"one sleeveless gown, two hundred dollars!" (*Sits back weakly and fans himself with the bill.*) Wow! Turn on the gas and let me go! What would it have been if it had had sleeves? (*Suddenly he straightens up and looks determined.*)

This is the limit! Henceforth and hereafter and from this time on, the women in this house are going to wear calico dresses like my dear old mother wore, at twelve and a half cents per! (*Pounds desk viciously.*) Calico gowns for Easter Sunday, the latest style, value thirty cents, on sale at twenty-nine and three-quarter cents, two for a half dollar! (*This last sentence as rapidly as possible. He finishes with a guffaw, rises, and paces to and fro in front of table during the following lines.*) Them's what the women in this house are going to wear for Easter as long as I am ruling this roost and fishing for the goldfish that go into their mouths out in the desert of the business world, with my back to the wall, trying to keep the home fires burning. (*He pauses here because he has run out of breath. He plants his feet firmly as he halts down center.*) I've said my say. I'm done!

(*He turns toward right, his expression suddenly changing, and seems to sag, but presently grins.*)

Oh, h'lo, mother. I didn't hear you come in. Eh? What do you say? What have I been raving about? Oh (*laughs and comes to right slowly*), I was just practicing how to talk to my wife on Easter, when I get one. Huh? Where did I learn? (*He winks.*) I heard dad reading the riot act last night, and say—! (*Laughs and slaps his knee, then puts out a hand.*) But never you mind, mother, I'm with you. You've just got to look nice on Easter Sunday, 'course. Huh! What does dad think? A fellow wants his mother to look like a 1904 model? I guess not! Come on, mom. (*Goes to right entrance.*) Show us the glad rags. Dad ought to know

that as long as there are Easter bells, there will be Easter bills! (*Laughs and exit, right.*)

THE EASTER SINGERS OF TYROL

(*Exercise for nine boys and nine girls*)

CHARACTERS

HANS, FRITZ, KURT, FRANZ, JOHAN, HEINIE, JACOB, DIEDRICH, WILHELM	*Tyrolese peasants and Easter singers*
MINNA, ELSA, BEATA	*Peasant girls in red*
MARTA, KATHIE, MARIE	*Peasant girls in black*
FRIEDA, GRETCHEN, FREDERICKA	*Peasant girls in white*

COSTUMES.—The nine boys, who represent Easter singers, are dressed in the costume of Tyrolese peasants, wearing white blouses, sleeveless overblouses of red, richly embroidered or beaded, flowing ties, short trousers of black sateen, tight at the knee, white hose and black shoes, a wide, embroidered or beaded belt, a felt hat having a tall feather sticking straight up at back. Each carries on his right arm a small ornamental basket to receive Easter cakes. The girls also wear the Tyrol-

ese peasant costume. Minna, Elsa, and Beata wear white, full blouses with full sleeves ending in a ruffle at the elbow, red bodice and a long, full skirt, shorter white apron prettily edged with lace, fringe, or embroideries, a red shawl worn like a fichu and tied at front, a red handkerchief tied under chin for head-covering. Marta, Kathie, and Marie are similarly dressed, except that a black bodice, skirt, shawl, and handkerchief replace the red ones. Frieda, Gretchen, and Fredericka are similarly dressed, but entirely in white, and each carries three Easter lilies.

SCENE: *The mountainous province of the Tyrol. A back drop shows mountain peaks, or soft draperies of blue may be substituted. A little down stage from the back drop are three wooden doors set in a wall of gray stone, easily simulated with building paper. The doors have huge hinges painted on them, and swing inward so as to permit the girls to stand in the doorways. Trees may be added at sides, if desired, and stage grass may be placed around the edges of the stage.*

The music of the "Corn Song" begins, and the Easter singers dance on from the right, three by three, arm in arm, jolly and spirited. They use the following step: They slide one foot forward, then lift it high, bending the body forward, set it down and draw the body back to an upright position, repeating the same movements with the other foot. The first three singers, Hans, Fritz, and Kurt, advance in a curving line toward the center of the stage and dance in a curving line to the upper left corner. The next three, Franz, Johan, and Heinie, dance in a curving line toward center, then around to the left in a semicircle, and come to position down left. The last three, Jacob, Diedrich, and Wilhelm, make a curve to the center and past it to the left a little way, then describing a wide curve, dance across the front to a point down right. All three groups, having reached

their respective positions, loose arms and make *V*-shaped groups, the *V* pointing in the direction in which the group is about to dance. Then the three down left dance with the same step to the center of the stage, link hands, and dance once around in a circle, then dance back to position while the trio up left dance together in curving lines toward the upper right corner, around the stage and back to position, and the trio down right dance in curving lines across the front to the left, around the left side and the rear, describing a complete circle around the stage—a circle inside which Franz, Johan, and Heinie are dancing up to the center and back. The dancers keep their free arms akimbo as they dance. When the three groups return to their original places, the group down right dance, with arms locked together, spirally toward the upper left corner, the trio down left dance, with the same spiral curves, to the upper right corner, while the trio up left whirl round and round across the rear until they reach a point up center. At end of music of song, all three groups come to position in a straight line across the rear of the stage, where all lock arms and sing, to the tune of the "Corn Song," as the song is repeated.

ALL (*singing*).

Look up, ye Tyrolese, and know
The Easter sun, aflame,
In words of fire on peaks of snow,
Is kindling God's great name.

And at each humble wayside shrine,
The peasant bows his head
Before the Christ who seems to shine
As risen from the dead!

While tinted blooms of almond tree,
And birds in sweet accord,
And Alpine brooklets, purling free,
All praise a risen Lord.

(*The singers advance to front, singing more loudly.*)

CHORUS

Oh, Tyrolese, a gift of hope
(*Each trio faces its respective doors.*)
The Easter singers bring!
So ope your doors, your hearts, ah, ope
Unto your risen King!
(*All extend hands toward doors.*)

(*The music ceases, and the singers relax and laugh, the three at right leaning against right wing, the three at left against left wing, the three at center sitting cross-legged upon floor.*)

HANS (*speaking to the others*).
Now, friends, no Easter singers can vie
With us all Tyrol through;
So let us knock at yonder door
(*Pointing to left door.*)
And get a cake or two.

FRITZ.
It is a custom very quaint,
And quite as it should be,
That maids should Easter cakes bestow
On singers such as we.
(*Pats his head and grins.*)

KURT.
No maiden e'er could cakes deny
To such beguiling voices!
And hearts are kind at Easter time,
When all the world rejoices.

KURT *steps to door at left and knocks as the three singers at center rise and join the group at right. The door opens slowly inward, and there appear in the doorway, one behind the other, the three girls in red,* MIN-

NA, ELSA, *and* BEATA, *with* MINNA *leading. All singers stare at them.*

MINNA.

Who are the roistering strangers
Whose hands our door do shake?

KURT (*doffing hat and bowing*).

We're the Tyrol's Easter singers,
And we beg an Easter cake.

ELSA (*advancing and standing beside* MINNA).

We do not think of food to-day,
But of Christ's cruel scourge and thorn.

FRITZ (*standing a little behind* HANS *and doffing his cap*).

The time of mourning now is past,
Behold, 'tis Easter morn!

BEATA (*coming beside* ELSA, *arms linked*).

No chord in our hearts to song is tuned,
So go your noisy way.
(*All three girls shake their heads.*)

HANS (*joining his group and bowing to the girls*).

But our Master bids us all rejoice
On this glorious Easter Day.

(MINNA, ELSA, *and* BEATA *shake their heads again, slowly back away, and close the door. The disappointed singers in front of the door look at each other a moment solemnly, then throw back their heads, laugh, lock arms and dance to the center, where the other two groups join them, and all dance, nine abreast down to the front, turn their backs, and dance back to position, separating into three groups again. The disappointed three group at center, with their backs turned to the audience.*)

FRANZ.

When one door's closed, another opes;
We cannot fail to find

A maid whose cakes are very sweet,
Whose heart is good and kind.

He steps to door at right and knocks loudly. The door opens slowly inward, and there appear in the doorway, one behind the other, the three girls in black, MARTA, KATHIE, *and* MARIE, *with* MARTA *in the lead. The singers stare at them.*

MARTA.
Who dares in time of mourning such
Unseemly din to make?

FRANZ (*bowing and taking off his hat*).
We're the Tyrol's Easter singers,
And we beg an Easter cake.

KATHIE (*advancing to place beside* MARTA).
We mourn and fast and pray to-day,
For Christ lies in his tomb.

JOHAN (*standing beside* FRANZ *and bowing*).
But we sing his resurrection
That forever banished gloom.

MARIE (*advancing to place beside* KATHIE).
But the cross is e'er before us,
So leave us to our grief.

HEINIE (*advancing to* JOHAN'S *side and bowing*).
Behold resurrection painted
On each tender, new-born leaf!

(*The three girls in black shake their heads and disappear as door slowly closes.*)

(*The three singers,* FRANZ, JOHAN, *and* HEINIE, *shake their heads as the others did, then lock arms, laughing, and dance to center, while the group from the right falls in line behind them. Lastly, the group already at center turn about face, and the three lines dance around right side of stage, then down right and along front to center front in spiral lines, up left to upper left*

corner, around rear and down center to front, in a spiral line, up stage to the center rear, where first group go to right, middle group halt at center rear, and last group go to left. This leaves at the center rear, with backs turned, the three singers who have not yet spoken, JACOB, DIEDRICH, *and* WILHELM.)

JACOB.

Not every heart is deaf to hope,
Not every door is barred;
Perchance, those hearts (*pointing to central door*) will prove to be
Less bitter and less hard.
(*He goes to central door and knocks.*)

This door opens quickly and there appear in the doorway the smiling faces of the three girls in white, FRIEDA, GRETCHEN, *and* FREDERICKA, *side by side, each holding three Easter lilies.* FRIEDA *steps through doorway as she speaks.*

FRIEDA.

What friendly aid, this Easter Day,
Do you ask for Christ's sweet sake?

JACOB (*bowing very low*).

We are the Tyrol's Easter singers,
And we beg an Easter cake.

GRETCHEN (*stepping through doorway to right of* FRIEDA).

With all our hearts, we offer you
A gift more lovely still.
(*Showing lilies.*)

DIEDRICH (*advancing to place beside* JACOB *and bowing very low*).

The pure, white Easter lilies all
Our hearts with joy will fill.

FREDERICKA (*stepping through doorway to left of* FRIEDA).

For after death's brief winter's spent,
There comes eternal spring.

WILHELM (*coming between* JACOB *and* DIEDRICH *and bowing still lower*).

Foreshadowed by the Easter morn,
When rose our eternal King!

(GRETCHEN *now glides to right group, turns and gives each one a lily.* FREDERICKA *does same on left.* FRIEDA *steps in front of the middle group and gives to each a lily. Then the girls step to extreme right, to extreme left, and to center front, respectively.* FRANZ, JOHAN, *and* HEINIE *follow* GRETCHEN, *in single file;* JACOB, DIEDRICH, *and* WILHELM *follow* FRIEDA, *and* HANS, FRITZ, *and* KURT *follow* FREDERICKA. *All turn, and, facing closed doors, sing the chorus, to tune of chorus of the "Corn Song," as at beginning.*

SINGERS *and* GIRLS *in white.*

Oh, Tyrolese, a gift of hope
The Easter singers bring;
(*All extend hands toward doors.*)
So ope your doors, your hearts, ah, ope
Unto your risen King!

The doors on right and on left open quickly, and MINNA, ELSA, *and* BEATA *step through to join the singers at left, each girl in a space between two singers;* MARTA, KATHIE, *and* MARIE *do same on right.* FRIEDA, GRETCHEN, *and* FREDERICKA *now advance and meet at center front. All the others turn to face front and the three lines advance toward front and merge, forming a semicircle about the three girls in white. All in the semicircle join hands high, and look up at lilies.* FRIEDA, GRETCHEN, *and* FREDERICKA *lay their heads close together, arms about each other, for finale, which is same as opening chorus, without the dance.*

ALL (*singing*).

Look up, ye Tyrolese, and know
The Easter sun, aflame,
In words of fire on peaks of snow,
Is kindling God's great name.

And at each humble wayside shrine,
The peasant bows his head
Before the Christ who seems to shine
As risen from the dead!

While tinted blooms of almond tree,
And birds in sweet accord,
And Alpine brooklets, purling free,
All praise a risen Lord.

CHORUS

Oh, to all the world a gift of hope
The Easter singers bring,
So ope your hearts, ye people, ope
Unto your risen King!

(*All rise on tiptoe, eyes and hands and bodies straining upward, as the curtain is drawn. If there is no curtain, all may skip off the stage in couples to the music of the "Corn Song."*)

ESTHER'S EASTER EGGS

(*Play for four boys and three girls*)

CHARACTERS

ESTHER JOYCE, *a willing little mother's helper*
RONNIE JOYCE, *her twin brother*
NELL JOYCE, *her older sister*
BLANEY WILSON, *a neighbor boy*

JANE PALMER, *a jealous schoolmate*
PAT MCHENRY, *a young nuisance*
OWEN MCHENRY, *Pat's younger brother, ditto*

COSTUMES.—All the characters of the play wear everyday play clothes suitable for children of their ages, which range from seven to twelve, Pat and Owen being the youngest and Nell the oldest. Esther may wear a kitchen apron over her dress. Ronnie has, as properties, two chocolate Easter eggs, one wrapped in tissue paper, and a bag containing two pink candy eggs. Nell also has a large chocolate egg in a paper bag. Jane has a clothes basket apparently filled with clean laundry.

SCENE: *The backyard of the Joyce home. There is a fence with a gate at center, running across back of stage. Other entrances are at left and right respectively. At the right is a tree or a tall bush growing in a concealed pot. At the left is a bench occupied by several dolls in various stages of distress. From the tree or bush to the fence is strung a small line, on which are pinned sundry articles of doll apparel. In center of stage is a child's small table flanked by two or three small chairs; a doll's tea set adorns the table. Under the tree or bush, a doll's cradle holds a sleeping doll. It is the day before Easter.*

At rise of curtain, ESTHER *is discovered hanging doll clothes and singing loudly to tune of "Home, Sweet Home," with some difficulty, as her mouth is filled with clothespins.*

ESTHER (*singing*).

In palace and cottage,
  In every land and clime,
Our hearts swell with gladness,
  This happy Easter time.

(*She turns, having no more pins or clothes, and tak-*

ing up one of the dolls upon the bench, discovers it has a cracked head, and looks stricken.)

ESTHER. Why—why—Glorianna! Dear, dear! Your head is cracked! (*Studies the crack closely, in distress as she comes nearer front.*) Oh, *who* did that? Just when I had just finished your new Easter hat, too! Poor thing! (*Puts doll's face to her cheek and turns toward tree.*)

RONNIE *enters at right, running, with one chocolate egg wrapped in tissue paper in his pocket and another held close to his mouth, ready to be eaten.*

RONNIE. Hey, Esther! Here's— (*He notes her doleful expression.*) What's the matter? You crying? (*Comes close to her curiously.*)

ESTHER. No; I'm not, but I feel like it. Look! (*Shows doll.*) Glorianna's head is cracked. (*She goes to cradle, takes out its occupant, and puts the invalid in her place, then looks up with a sudden idea.*) Say, Ronnie, you didn't do it; did you?

RONNIE (*biting at egg*). No, sir-ee! I didn't. (*He crosses to left.*) *I* didn't, honest! (*He looks sidewise at her, half grinning.*)

ESTHER (*coming quickly to him, and putting a hand upon his shoulder*). *You* didn't maybe; but you know who did, I'll bet. Who did it? (*She shakes him.*)

RONNIE (*grinning and wriggling*). Aw, Blaney Wilson dropped her on the cement sidewalk, to see if she was a unbreakable doll.

ESTHER (*severely*). Well, I guess he found out she wasn't, all right! (*She goes back to cradle.*) Poor Glorianna! And her new Easter hat won't fit any of my other children, either. Dear!

RONNIE. I don't blame you for bein' mad at Blaney. I'll fight him for you, if you want me to, Esther. (*He begins to flex his muscles in eager preparation, and jumps up and down to get warmed up for the fray.*)

ESTHER (*following him, about to check him*). No, no, no, Ronnie! Don't you remember what Miss Field said in Sunday school about the Easter spirit? She said we must not have any cross feelings, only glad ones because our Lord came alive again on Easter Sunday.

RONNIE (*pulling away from her, and backing to right, impishly grinning*). Well, it ain't Easter till to-morrow. You can be mad all day to-day; can't you? Come on. Let's go get Blaney now, and beat him up good before Easter gets here. (*Pausing at right entrance, he shakes both doubled-up fists.*) Come on; let's! Eh?

ESTHER. Ronnie Joyce, we shan't do anything of the sort. I'm not going to let myself be cross. Anyway, I'll bet Blaney is sorry by now, 'cause he must have the Easter spirit, too. (*Turns to bench.*)

RONNIE (*shaking his head*). Nope. He ain't got any. He didn't hear a thing about it in Sunday school last Sunday. He was fishing all day.

ESTHER (*shocked*). Why! Somebody ought to *re*-form him! (*Looks determined and nods.*) And I'm going to do it, the first time I see him.

RONNIE (*waving a scornful hand at her*). Shucks! Us men don't *re*-form for no girl! (*He suddenly remembers the wrapped egg in his pocket.*) Say, I got something for you. (*Gives her the egg.*)

ESTHER (*unwrapping it a little*). Oh, that looks good! Who gave them to us?

RONNIE. Aunt Evelyn sent 'em up. I bit an end off o' mine, so I could see if 'twas hard or soft-boiled. (*Grins and takes another bite.*)

ESTHER (*laughing*). Which was it?

RONNIE. Can't you find out for yourself? (*Turns to go again.*)

ESTHER. Oh, I'm not going to spoil mine; it's so pretty. I shan't eat it till to-morrow. (*Wraps egg carefully and sets it on bench.*) And maybe I'll bring it over to Miss Bolling for an Easter present.

RONNIE (*turning sharply and coming a few steps back to her*). You better not! She's awful mad at you.

ESTHER (*staring*). At me! My teacher is mad at me?

RONNIE. Is she! (*He comes closer to her, and talks in a lower tone.*) She called up mother and told her that you copied in a 'xamination last Friday, and she said a lot about bein' dishonest and cheatin' and—say! Was she steppin'? I'll say she was! (*He chuckles and steps high around stage.*)

ESTHER (*heartbroken*). Why, that's terrible! I never did! You know I never would copy! Whoever said I did?

RONNIE. She said Jane Palmer saw you doin' it. But I wouldn't care, if I was you. Jane always flunks. She's jealous of you. (*Pats* ESTHER'S *arm.*)

ESTHER (*wiping her eyes*). But Miss Bolling—

RONNIE. Aw, ferget it. (*Gives her a little push.*) Let's play hospital. (*He picks up one of the dolls from the bench.*)

ESTHER (*quickly taking doll away from him*). No. I've got enough dead ones now. And I don't feel like playing at all. Dear me! (*She turns her back and leans on fence.*) How could Miss Bolling believe that I copied? I didn't! (*She turns and stamps her foot to emphasize her statement.*)

RONNIE. Well, I'd just give Jane Palmer a piece of my mind; that's what I'd do. I'd give her all 'at was comin' to her—me! (*He takes another bite of egg, savagely chewing.*) Gee, she can tell some whoppers—that girl! (*He flops on bench on top of a doll.*) I hate her and her brother Willie, too.

ESTHER. Get off that poor child, Ronnie. (*She pulls him up.*) And you mustn't hate anybody. Jane and Willie haven't got any mother, and their sister Mamie is awful mean to them and doesn't tell them what's right and what's wrong at all. They don't know any better. It's just awful how they live! I am not

so—very mad at her, I guess, 'cause I mustn't be. It's Easter. (*She sighs, goes to clothesline, and feels clothes to see if they are dry.*)

RONNIE. Well, all right; it's your funeral. I guess you've got the Easter spirit all right. (*He goes to right once more, and turns back to grin.*) But me (*whacks his chest*)—I'm a bad egg! (*Bites egg, winks, and exit at right.*)

ESTHER (*taking invalid doll out of cradle*). Poor Glorianna! I'd give you some of this Easter egg (*going to bench and picking up egg*), but I'm afraid your stomach may be upset after such an accident. (*Sits on bench, arranging dolls.*)

BLANEY WILSON *enters at left, whistling and debonair until he sees* ESTHER, *when he promptly wilts and stops.*

BLANEY. I—I—I was lookin' for Ronnie.

ESTHER. He's just gone back in the house. He brought me this Easter egg.

BLANEY (*covetously*). Wow! That looks good! Choc'late, eh?

ESTHER. Uh-huh. (*Meaning "yes."*) With marshmallow inside.

BLANEY (*licking his lips*). Yum-m-m-m! Well (*he looks guiltily at the broken doll, then sidewise at* ESTHER, *then strolls with head down to right*), I'll find Ronnie.

ESTHER (*rising*). Have you had any candy for Easter?

BLANEY. Nope. No such luck. Mom says ten cents will buy a loaf of bread, but I say 'at you can fill up on chocolate quicker'n on bread.

ESTHER (*coming to center, beside him*). Now listen. I'll give you this egg, if you will promise, cross your heart, never to touch my dolls again.

BLANEY (*squirming and digging toes into ground*). Gosh! I didn't mean—I only wanted to find out—

ESTHER. Yes, I know. But I'm telling you right now that not one of my children is unbreakable (*shaking a finger at him severely*)—not one! So you needn't try out any more of 'em. See? Promise?

BLANEY. I won't, honest, cross my heart! (*Crosses his heart with due solemnity.*) Gee! (*Laughs in relief.*) I thought you'd be awful mad at me, Esther; I did.

ESTHER (*sternly*). Boys that go to Sunday school know that you should not get mad at Easter time. You should forgive anybody that bothers you and just rejoice. That's what Miss Field said last Sunday.

BLANEY (*looking guilty, goes to right*). Then maybe you won't get mad at Pat and Owen McHenry.

ESTHER (*running to him in alarm*). Huh? What have they been doing?

BLANEY. They broke all your tulips in your front yard. (*Points with his thumb over his shoulder.*)

ESTHER (*drooping and backing to fence*). Dear, dear, dear! (*Wags her head, discouraged.*) If that isn't awful! I had just enough for three Easter bouquets for my three old ladies. Those boys are terrible! (*Paces excitedly along fence.*)

BLANEY. Now you're gettin' mad. (*Appears pleased to have caught her in the act.*)

ESTHER (*sighing deeply and musing quietly a moment at back, then coming to bench*). N—no, I don't —think I am. Pat and Owen are just little fellows, 'course. Maybe I can find some other flowers somewhere, but my tulips—

BLANEY (*with his eyes on the egg*). Well, I wouldn't touch any of your flowers—I wouldn't, and I shan't touch your dolls, either. (*He looks hopeful.*)

ESTHER (*bringing egg to him, wearily*). All right. Here's your egg.

BLANEY (*overjoyed*). Say—thanks! Much 'bliged,

Esther. (*He turns to go at right.*) Say—I'm goin' to Sunday school to-morrow—Easter Sunday. I—(*Exit at right, immediately sticking his head in again to continue timidly.*) I'm goin' every Sunday! (*Exit at right.*)

Esther (*giggling as she looks after him*). He did *re*-form, Glorianna; he did! Wait till I tell Ronnie. (*She looks sad again.*) My tulips! (*She arranges two dolls in the small chairs at table.*) That egg did look good, Glorianna, but it wouldn't be good for your poor stomach at all. (*She puts Glorianna in chair, and places pillow from cradle at her back.*) Dear! I wish I could forget about my flowers, because if I keep thinking about them, honest, Glorianna, I shall get madder than anything!

Enter Nell *through the gate up center, carrying a chocolate egg in a paper bag.*

Nell. You look glum, honey. One of our children got pneumonia?

Esther. No; but did you see my tulips, Nell?

Nell (*aroused*). No. I came the back way. Why? What's the matter with them?

Esther. The McHenry boys broke them—every one of them. Blaney Wilson just told me.

Nell (*angrily*). The little nuisances! I'll fix them!

Esther. N—no; never mind. But if you'll just pick up my flowers, so I won't have to see them— (*She turns away.*)

Nell. It's a shame! I shall talk to them, just the same. They're nuisances! (*She pats* Esther's *arm and starts for right entrance.*) You wanted the tulips for your old ladies; didn't you?

Esther. Yes; but Pat and Owen didn't know, 'course.

Nell. No, but they are old enough to leave other people's property alone. They need a good talking-to.

And I'm just the one to give it to them. (*She moves nearer right entrance.*)

ESTHER (*following her*). Don't, Nell. I'll talk to them myself.

NELL (*remembering her bag*). Oh, I was carrying off your egg. I got it for you down town. (*Hands bag to* ESTHER.) With the one that Aunt Evelyn sent you, that makes you two. Better not eat them both to-day, honey. (*Exit at right.*)

ESTHER (*running with egg to table and picking up Glorianna, laughing*). Te-hee! Glorianna, we've got an egg, after all! And maybe just a tiny bite won't hurt you. (*Scrapes off some chocolate and puts it into doll's mouth. Then she tastes the egg speculatively with her tongue.*)

Enter JANE PALMER *at left, carrying a basket of laundry.*

ESTHER. Hello, Jane.

JANE. Is your mother at home?

ESTHER (*nodding*). Want to play with me after?

JANE. If—if you want me to.

ESTHER. Sure. You'll be the mother, and these will all be your children (*indicating dolls*), and this will be your house (*running to right and touching tree or bush*), and I'll be your hired girl.

JANE (*wistfully putting down basket and crossing to bench to touch the dolls*). That'll be fun. I haven't got a doll, 'cept one made out of a stuffed stocking.

ESTHER. My goodness! Haven't you? (*She runs back to bench.*) I'll give you one. I've got so many that Nell calls me the old woman that lived in a shoe. (*They both laugh.*) I'll give you a real, big one that sleeps and says, "ma-ma."

JANE (*dumb with delight, clasping her hands, gurgles*). O-oh!

ESTHER (*in an orgy of generosity*). And I'll give

you this Easter egg, too, if you don't mind that I touched it with my tongue. (JANE *shakes her head vigorously, to show that she doesn't mind.*) Do you like choc'late Easter eggs?

JANE. Oh, yes, but (*she backs, hand out to prevent* ESTHER *from coming nearer*)—but wait a minute. I want to tell you first— I— (*She hangs her head.*)

ESTHER. I know all about it, Janey, but maybe you really thought I was copying. I wasn't, really.

JANE (*with honesty*). I knew you weren't. I was just mad 'cause I didn't pass, and you—you got such a good mark, and—

ESTHER (*putting her arm around* JANE'S *shoulders*). I'm sorry you didn't pass. I could help you with your numbers, if you want me to any time.

JANE (*wiping her eyes with her sleeve*). All right. (*She suddenly puts her arm around* ESTHER *and hugs her hard.*) I wisht I was good like you, Esther. (*She backs away, straightening determinedly.*) But I can fix it with Miss Bolling, anyway. I'll tell her 'twasn't so at all. I'll tell her this very minute. (*Starts to run out left.*)

ESTHER (*catching her and drawing her back*). Never mind now. We'll play till noontime. Then this afternoon, we'll both go and see her and tell her that you made a mistake. That'll be all right. Come on. You'd never do it again, I know.

JANE. I guess I wouldn't, for a million dollars; you're so good. I'm goin' to try to be nice like you, Esther. (*Wipes her eyes.*)

ESTHER (*patting* JANE *and putting the egg into her hand*). There; don't cry. There's your egg. Don't handle it and then rub your eyes, else you'll look like a pickaninny. (*Both laugh.*) Let's get this basket out of the way.

(*Exeunt* ESTHER *and* JANE *at right, with basket.*)

After a pause, RONNIE *comes jigging and hopping in*

through the gate up center, with his face smeared with chocolate.

RONNIE (*yelling*). Esther! Essie! Hoo-hoo! (*Looks off right, waves his hands, and runs across to extreme right, shouting.*) Es-ther! Come back here! (*Beckons extravagantly with both arms.*)

ESTHER *runs in quickly at right, while* RONNIE *backs to center.*

ESTHER. Glory! How you yell! Is the barn on fire? (*Turns away from his smeared face in disgust.*) Ronnie, go and wash your face.

RONNIE. No use. (*He takes from his pocket a bag containing two pink Easter eggs and gives them to her.*) Two more Easter eggs—pink this time. Gram sent 'em over. Mine are in my pocket. Here. Pretty, huh?

ESTHER. Awful pretty. (*Admires them.*)

RONNIE. Did you eat your other two?

ESTHER. No. (*She puts bag on table.*)

RONNIE. Gosh! Then you've got four. (*Goes left.*) Two o' mine are in here (*slapping pocket*), and two of 'em are in here. (*Pats his stomach and grins.*)

ESTHER. Two! You'll crow like a rooster if you eat any more to-day.

RONNIE (*with ear-splitting shrillness*). Cock-a-doodle-do-o-o-o! (*Exit at left.*)

Enter JANE *at right, still carrying her egg carefully.*

JANE. I'm goin' to give half of my egg to Willie when I get home.

ESTHER. That's right. (*Takes white cloth from among doll clothes and puts it around her head like a maid's cap.*) Now I'll put this on for a cap, and you must tell me what to do.

JANE (*importantly*). You dress all the dolls up for Easter Sunday.

ESTHER (*curtsying*). Yes, ma'am. (*Turning her back, she picks doll from cradle and looks for clothes, while* JANE, *her back also turned, is busy at table.*)

PAT *and* OWEN *enter, cautiously, at left, half bent over. They try to creep across to right without being seen.* OWEN *stumbles against the bench and nearly falls, and the two girls turn quickly.* PAT *and* OWEN *stand at left, abashed.*

ESTHER (*crossing to them*). Oh! I don't wonder you didn't want me to see you. You are bad, bad boys! That's what you are—breaking all my lovely flowers. (*She seizes a boy in each hand.*) Now poor old Mrs. Curtis won't have any Easter bouquet at all!

PAT. Mrs. Curtis? Gum whiskers! She's good to us, too. She gives us apples. (*He scratches his head, dismayed.*)

ESTHER. Of course she does, and Mrs. Deming and Miss Mollison, too—they all give you cookies and grapes and things. And now you've broken all the tulips I was going to give them for Easter. (*She shakes the boys.*)

OWEN. Cracky! We hadn't ought to, Pat. (*He looks painfully virtuous.*)

PAT. Nope, sure enough, we hadn't ought to. (*A bright idea comes to him. He turns to* ESTHER.) Say, we'll go and stick 'em all in again, if you want us to. (*He tries to break away.*)

ESTHER (*holding tightly to him and shaking him again*). That's silly. They're dead as door nails. They die just as soon as you break their stems, 'course.

PAT. Gum whiskers! That's too bad!

OWEN. Cracky! (*Shakes his head dolefully.*)

ESTHER (*releasing the boys and going to table to get bag*). Now see here, you two, will you promise never, never, never to break anybody's flowers, if I give you each a lovely, pink Easter egg? (*Holds up the eggs.*)

PAT (*reaching for one*). Uh-huh; we surely will.

(OWEN *nods and reaches for an egg.*)

ESTHER (*putting eggs behind her back*). Sure?

OWEN. You givin' us a Easter egg for breakin' your flowers? (*He giggles nervously.*)

ESTHER (*emphatically*). Well, I guess not! I'm giving them to you for not ever breaking anybody's flowers any more. Understand?

PAT. Not no more, sure's we're livin'! (*Puts out his hand.*)

OWEN. Same here. (*Edges close to* ESTHER.)

ESTHER (*giving each a pink egg*). Then take them and (*pointing a finger*) re-member!

(PAT *and* OWEN *start toward right, licking eggs and grinning as they look back.*)

PAT. Gum whiskers!

OWEN. Cracky!

(*Exeunt* PAT *and* OWEN *at right.*)

ESTHER (*hugging* JANE *and laughing aloud*). Aren't they funny, Jane? Gum whiskers!

JANE (*mimicking*). Cr-r—racky! (*Both rock with laughter.*)

A commotion, a scuffling, and a screaming are heard off right, and RONNIE *enters, dragging the protesting* PAT *and* OWEN *by the arms, their pink eggs in the possession of* RONNIE.

RONNIE. Come on, here! Come on! Say, Essie, did you know these kids busted all your tulips out front? And now they say that you gave them these eggs. I say they swiped 'em from you!

OWEN (*gulpingly*). We never!

ESTHER (*crossing and pulling at* RONNIE). Of

course, they never. I gave them to them myself. Stop, Ronnie! Let them go.

RONNIE (*shouting*). I tell you they busted your flowers. Didn't you hear me?

ESTHER. There's no danger of my not hearing you. (*Claps hands to ears.*) I know all about it. They said they'd never do it again. Let them alone.

RONNIE. Well, they didn't say they'd never bust my cart again, so I'll hang right on to 'em awhile.

PAT. Your cart! (*Wrenching away angrily.*) We never touched your cart. So!

RONNIE. Huh? (*Reaches in vain for* PAT.)

OWEN. No; we didn't! You're fibbing.

RONNIE (*doubling up his fists*). Come on. I can trim the two of you with one hand behind my back. Come on! (*Strikes the attitude of a boxer.*)

OWEN (*looking at* ESTHER). Aw, we ain't goin' to fight—

ESTHER. 'Course not. Ronnie, aren't you ashamed of yourself? Fighting at Easter time! What did Miss Field tell you? (*She pushes the smaller boys to left and takes* RONNIE'S *arm coaxingly.*) It's all fixed up now, so go and find Blaney, and let Pat and Owen play with you. They won't get into mischief if you keep them busy.

RONNIE (*yielding none too gracefully*). Well— (*Goes slowly left, where the three boys remain talking in pantomime until the end of the play.*)

Enter NELL *at right, smiling.*

NELL. I've got something nice to tell you, Esther.

ESTHER (*jumping up and down*). What is it? What is it?

NELL. I told mother about your tulips, and Ronnie told her about the doll and how nice you were about everything, so she says that she will order three Easter lilies for you to give to your old ladies.

JANE. Real, tall lilies! (*Clasps her hands in rapture.*) Oh, Esther!

ESTHER (*clasping* NELL'S *arm*). Lilies growing in pots?

NELL (*nodding*). Uh-huh! (*Meaning "yes."*) They'll be much nicer than tulips, because they will keep on growing ever so long.

ESTHER. Oh, oh, oh! (*Chants a little song of delight, as she pirouettes about stage.*) I'm so glad! I'm so happy! (*She hugs* JANE, *who stands near table.*) You can come with me, Janey, and give them to my old ladies. (*She stands at center, beaming and looking around upon the rest.*) Isn't Easter a happy time?

NELL (*patting* ESTHER'S *head lovingly*). It is, honey, for those who have the Easter spirit.

CURTAIN

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DATE DUE

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JAN 31 '72			
MAR 16 '77			
MAR 19 '84			
APR 30 '84			
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